Certified Educational Chief Technology Officers Leading Innovation in North Carolina Schools

Certified Educational Chief Technology Officers (CeCTO) are making a positive impact in North Carolina.

We have entered a transformational era of education that requires new models of teaching and content delivery. From enabling modern thought leadership and vision in school districts, to encouraging confident decision making in technology from the classroom to the enterprise to creating new jobs, the CeCTO program is an essential guide to innovation for school technology directors and superintendents in the state.

CeCTO uses technology as a tool to solve problems. In light of rapid changes in technology, models and evolving educational standards, this program is helping education leaders to succeed in this challenging and exciting age.
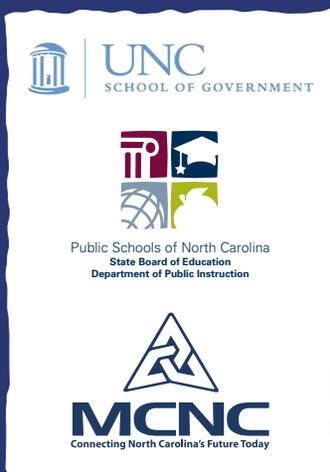
Offered through a partnership between N.C. Department of Public Instruction, UNC School of Government's Center for Public Technology and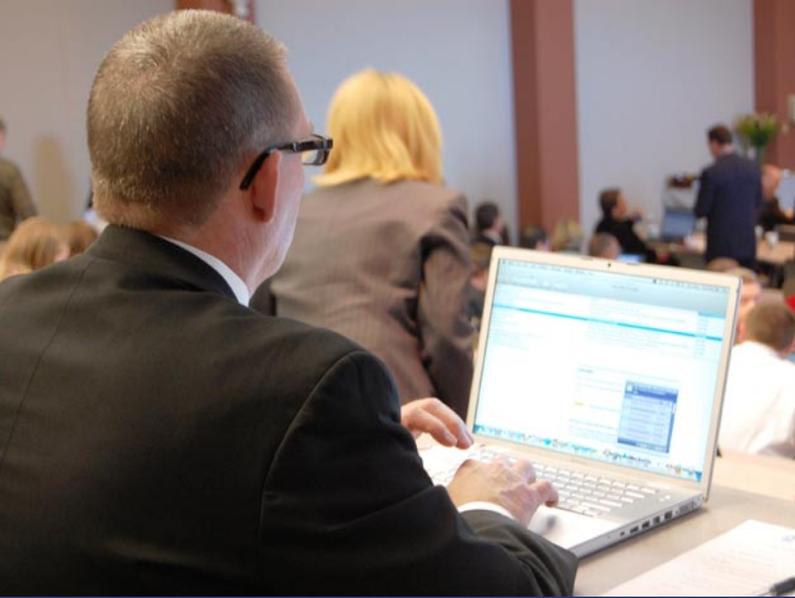 MCNC, North Carolina is leading the nation by providing a model that articulates the value technology directors and superintendents bring to the table in the 21st century.

CeCTO is meeting the requirements of today's world. The program launched in 2010 to give IT professionals working in education the opportunity to build on the leadership and communication skills needed to make strategic IT business decisions for their school districts – not just to teach them technology tools.

District technology directors are responsible for a broad range of technology that is increasingly complex, greater in number and scope, and ever more integrated into the daily instructional and administrative routines of today's school districts. CeCTO equips district technology leaders with the expertise to create compelling learning environments and empower them to position themselves as educational leaders – not just technology leaders – who provide the vision for the role technology can play in innovation.

The program features two components – one for superintendents and one for technology directors.

> *"The CeCTO program made an immediate impact in my role as a technology leader for my district."*
>
> **David Useche**
> **Caswell County**
> **CECTO**

Nearly 70 school leaders from across the state participated in the inaugural class in 2010 with another 21 North Carolina tech directors (and one from Tennessee) participating this year along with each accompanying district's superintendent.

David Useche, CeCTO for Caswell County Schools, participated in the inaugural course. The program gave him a better understanding of his role as a leader who must sell a vision of using technology infrastructure more efficiently and effectively to benefit students and the community.

Useche said the program made an immediate impact and motivated him to start collecting information from surveys in his district and neighboring districts. He used this data to create a comparative analysis to see where they were compared to other districts in the state. Flash forward a year and a new position was created in the Caswell IT department based on those survey results. "We were at a disadvantage compared to neighboring districts based on the data," Useche explained. "Having the knowledge and skills developed through CeCTO is one of the more positive results of having been involved in the class."

The demand on technology leaders continues to grow. Administrators and teachers want more control over maintaining their websites and resources for online classes, students need secure email and file access from home, parents want to see published grades and get alerts about

class and school events, and everyone wants internal communication to be more effective and efficient. On top of all that, state standards are increasingly requiring these capabilities. Along those lines, another positive result of CeCTO's initial class came from Polk County Schools.

Polk CeCTO David Scherping said the course helped him to evaluate the decision to incorporate aspects of Google for Educators. He noted that the district started using Google Docs with its high school English students during the second semester of 2011 based on teacher feedback and conversations during CeCTO.

He said teachers and students were having an issue with submitting their assignments in an electronic format that was easy for everyone to read and edit. The students would start an assignment on a computer at home or at school with one version of Microsoft Word and then couldn't continue to work on it in another location because they didn't have access to the same version of Word. "Google Docs has eliminated this problem," he added. "Students can now access their documents from any Internet-connected computer and submit it for proofing or grading by sharing the document with the teacher."

The overall reaction from the first CeCTO program as well as participants in the second class currently underway has been positive, and all agree that they hope to see some kind of continuation of the program in the years to come.

Instruction for the second class began in February 2011 with graduation scheduled in November.

> *"CeCTO was a great opportunity, and so far, it has helped me to evaluate vital technology decisions for the district."*
>
> **David Scherping**
> **Polk County**
> **CeCTO**

2011 CeCTO Certification Participants

LEA or Charter School	CeCTO	Leaders for the 21st Century
Anson County Schools	Georgia Maner	Greg Firn
Brunswick County Schools	Leonard Jenkins	Edward Pruden
Cabarrus County Schools	Kelly Propst	Barry Shepherd
Casa Esperanza Montessori Charter School	Lynne Hudson	Janice Bonham-West
Chatham County Schools	Keith Medlin	Robert Logan
Cumberland County Schools	Kevin Coleman	Frank Till
Duplin County Schools	Dawn Craft	Austin Obasohan
Harnett County Schools	Jeff Pittman	Tom Frye - interim
Henderson County Public Schools	Rick Fender	David Jones
Jackson County Schools	David Proffitt	Sue Nations
Jones County Public Schools	Victor Coleman	Michael Bracy
Nash-Rocky Mount Schools	Jane Finch	Richard McMahon
NCVPS	Chanin Rivenbark	Bryan Setser
Pamlico County Schools	Joseph Spruill	James Coon
Pender County Schools	Landon Scism	Allison Sholar
Randolph County Schools	Nan York	Donald Andrews
Roanoke Rapids Graded Schools	Mark Kuchenbrod	Dennis Sawyer
Stokes County Schools	Sarah Wood	Stewart Hobbs
Union Academy	Celest O'Brien	Raymond Reinsant
Watauga County Schools	Scarlet Davis	Marty Hemric
Weldon City Schools	Alicia Hossein	Elie Bracy, III