

FCPS lands an HP Innovations in Education grant

Fayette County Public Schools is one of 25 school systems nationwide to receive a highly competitive 2009 HP Innovations in Education grant. FCPS will get an award package of HP technology, cash and professional services valued at more than \$265,000.

The HP grant program is designed to help educators address the need for raising student achievement in math and science and increase student awareness in high-tech college and career opportunities. Technologies such as wireless HP tablet PCs, wide-format HP DesignJet printers, high-power mobile workstations, mini-notebook PCs and HP graphing calculators will be used in innovative ways to fundamentally redesign the student learning experience.

The aim here is to establish a program at Leestown Middle School to prepare students to enter the pre-engineering track at Lafayette High School, according to Greg Drake, the district's coordinator of instructional technology. While the bulk of the grant will be in the form of hardware from HP, there also is a strong training component with expertise provided by the International Society for Technology in Education.

The grant, written by Stephen Holthaus at Leestown in collaboration with staff at Lafayette, will also strengthen the relationship with partners at UK.

"A core group of administrators, math, science and technology instructors from the two schools and the University of Kentucky will guide the program and ensure a rigorous engineering program focused on student-centered, inductive learning in real-world experiences," Holthaus said.

Notably, Fayette County will be able to build on its videoconferencing capabilities to bring engineering professors "virtually" into classrooms at Leestown and Lafayette, giving middle and high school students an opportunity to learn college-level information from university experts.

"Even though the goal is to prepare kids for Lafayette's pre-engineering, I believe kids would come out of the middle school program with a more rigorous grounding that could get them into any one of the high school special programs," said Drake, citing the Math, Science & Technology Center at Paul Laurence Dunbar High and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme at Tates Creek High School, among others.