

For Immediate Release

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CoSN Selects 13 Leading-Edge School Districts to Develop Best Practices on the Innovative Use of Digital Media in K-12 Education

Washington, DC (December 7, 2011) – The Consortium for School Networking (CoSN) today announced the 13 leading-edge school districts the association has selected to participate in a collaborative effort or “cadre” to share experiences, challenges and best practices for innovative uses of new media in K-12 education. In September, CoSN launched a nationwide search for districts that are at the forefront of social media, Web 2.0 and student-owned mobile device usage, as part of its *Participatory Learning in Schools: Leadership and Policy* initiative. A total of 48 applications were received, and CoSN convened an independent panel to evaluate each district based on 10 key criteria. The 13 districts were selected both for being exemplary in meeting the criteria and for demonstrating a strong commitment to working with other districts. The goal of this effort is to develop effective thought leadership and policy related to the use of digital media.

“These 13 districts are taking significant steps to advance the use of digital media to reimagine education, and are uncovering how these technologies can help to re-envision K-12 teaching and learning,” said Dr. James Bosco, Principal Investigator for *CoSN’s Participatory Learning in Schools: Leadership & Policy* initiative. “In classrooms across the country, there are excellent things happening with digital media here and there. However, the critical problem we face is ‘going to scale.’ Each of the districts selected has demonstrated a commitment to making best practice use of digital media standard practice throughout the district.”

The districts selected include Calcasieu Parish Public Schools (LA); Centennial School District (PA); Chicago Public Schools (IL); Fairfax County Public Schools (VA); ISD 199, Inver Grove Heights Community Schools (MN); Katy Independent School District (TX); Manor Independent School District (TX); Mooresville Graded School District (NC); Oconomowoc School District (WI); Springfield Public Schools (MA); State College Area School District (PA); Stillwater Area Public Schools (MN); Trussville City Schools (AL); and Westfield Washington Schools (IN). The districts were evaluated based on the following criteria:

- The district's policy regarding the use of student owned mobile devices for classroom instruction;
- The district's policy regarding the use of social media for classroom instruction by students;
- The extent to which social media is used by teachers and/or administrators to communicate with parents and community;
- Whether the district's acceptable use policies (AUP) have been revised to respond to recent developments in the proliferation of Web 2.0 applications and mobile devices;
- Whether district-wide initiatives, practices or policies have been established in the last three years to promote major modifications in teaching and learning in the district;
- Whether the district has implemented policies, guidelines or programs to cultivate safe, responsible and effective use of social media;
- Whether there are district-wide initiatives to encourage and support collaborative learning;
- Whether the district has in place policies, resources or practices to encourage and enable students to post and publish their work on the Web and/or participate in civic, artistic, cultural activities that go beyond school;
- Whether there any district level policies, practices or formal organizational linkages that support efforts to connect students' out-of-school learning in clubs, libraries, museums, etc. or personal online networks, websites, etc. with their school in-school learning; and

- Whether student digital literacy competencies are assessed.

Each of the selected districts assembled a team of senior level administrators to participate in the cadre with other innovative school district leaders. The cadre members convened in Washington, DC on December 6th for an in-person meeting, during which they learned about each other's school districts, with a particular emphasis on the innovative policies and practices to make best practice educational uses of new digital media. They also took the first step at collaboration by forming working groups focused on key problems or issues they are facing. The district leaders will maintain their collaboration in an online community of practice (CoP), CoSN's Access4ed.net, which provides a full array of tools and resources to facilitate sharing of information, group communication and collaboration. In the coming months, CoSN will release progress reports on the cadre's work, comprising concise syntheses of "lessons learned" as promising and best case findings, which will be shared with the broader education and educational technology community.

"From Web 2.0 to mobile devices, these evolving technologies play an increasingly dominant role in students' lives in and out of the classroom," said CoSN CEO Keith Krueger. "The members of the cadre each bring a unique approach to leveraging these new media tools, and their collaborative work will provide them with an opportunity to learn from each other. Most importantly, in conjunction with the cadre districts CoSN will be able to share their collective knowledge and lessons learned with the broader education technology community."

CoSN's *Participatory Learning in Schools: Leadership and Policy* initiative is supported by a grant from the John D. and Catherine T. [MacArthur Foundation's digital media and learning initiative](#), which is designed to help determine how digital technologies are changing the way young people learn, play, socialize and participate in civic life. Additional support is provided by Adobe, Gartner, GlobalScholar, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Lightspeed Systems, Pearson, SAS, and Smart Technologies.

To learn more about the initiative, visit: www.cosn.org/web20/.

About the Consortium for School Networking (CoSN)

CoSN is the premier professional association for school, district and educational service agency technology leaders. CoSN's members are a unique blend of education and technology leaders and decision makers from the public and private sectors. The mission of CoSN is to empower K-12 district technology leaders to use technology strategically for the improvement of teaching and learning.

CoSN provides leadership, community, and advocacy essential for the success of these leaders. Visit www.cosn.org or phone 866.267.8747 to find out more about [CoSN's Leadership Initiatives](#), [annual conference and events](#), [policy and advocacy](#), [membership](#), and [resources](#) supporting and promoting leadership development to ensure that technology is used strategically for the improvement of teaching and learning in elementary and secondary schools.

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