

## Celebrating Success in District 4

### Shedding some "LITE" on Technology in the Classroom

The Learning in Technological Environments (LITE) project is designed to improve access to, and use of, technology by teachers and students - which has been identified as a priority area within the Cormack Trail School Board's Strategic Plan. In January, 2003, the first phase of this initiative was introduced at St. James' Junior High School in Port aux Basques. Teachers were provided with laptop computers and connected to a wireless network where they could access Internet resources from anywhere in the school.

The LITE initiative challenges schools to think "outside the box" when it comes to using technology. Its intent is to provide students and teachers with access to mobile technology, in the form of laptop computers, that can be used to enhance and diversify the types of instruction and learning that can occur in the classroom.

The primary goal of the project is to introduce a seamless integration of technology into classroom settings as a tool for teaching, learning, and communicating.

After St. James' Junior High elected to become involved in the pilot phase, teachers were provided with laptops and professional development on how to utilize the technology in their classrooms. Grade 7 students were identified as the primary focus for the 2002-2003 school year. Phase II of the program was initiated this year with the provision of laptops to the (now) Grade 8 students. With high speed Internet access in each classroom, and supporting instructional hardware, teachers and students have the opportunity to optimize their learning environment.

#### Teachers, Students Feel Positive Impact of Project

The impact on teaching through this program has been tremendous. Teachers have indicated their confidence in their ability to use technology as a teaching tool has increased dramatically. Some benefits noted by teachers include: more readily available resources; more effective presentations of content; website development for communicating to parents; access to real time data; support for dated textbooks; better classroom management resulting in fewer discipline problems; and a more student-centered approach to learning. Students say they find learning more interesting, they enjoy school more, and they feel computers motivate them. Meanwhile, as the project continues, the impact on student achievement is being monitored by local testing and provincial Criterion-Referenced Tests (CRTs).

The Cormack Trail School District hopes to expand the LITE initiative in the future. Through partnerships with parents, bursary programs and community partnerships, no student will be denied the opportunity to participate in the program. In the long term, the district would like to see some form of this model available in all schools.

#### District 4 Profile

	2003-04	2002-03
Schools	27	27
Students	5098	5367
Teachers	403.3	417.0
Pupil-Teacher Ratio	12.3	12.5

