

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Evans Elementary School Achieves Program Success ***Local principal receives honorarium for technology-based programming***

Evans, W.Va. – A local principal has been honored for her commitment to creating technology-rich teaching and learning environments for students in Jackson County. Barbara Upton, principal of Evans Elementary School, recently received an award and honorarium from The Education Alliance for her leadership in the Student Educational and Economic Development Success (SEEDS) program. Upton launched an aggressive effort to integrate more technology into instructional strategies in order to strengthen classroom engagement.

SEEDS is an exclusive professional development experience for public school principals in West Virginia that links them with a professional education consultant and seasoned business CEO. Together, they develop and execute a business plan that targets key challenges at their schools. The benefits of SEEDS include enhanced principal leadership skills, increased student achievement and community involvement, and improvements in facilities and management processes. Upton was assisted by Dr. Leonard Allen, a Marshall University faculty member who served as her SEEDS' consultant, and by Dr. Amy Cottle, a technology integration consultant who served as her business mentor.

Upton's approach was grounded in teacher preparation and access. She embedded technology resources and instruction into staff development for her teachers, and she purchased the necessary digital tools for the classrooms. "Relevant technology integration facilitates student engagement, taps into student learning styles and helps individualize instruction for students," Upton explained. Her vision set the tone for the program's success, and her commitment to her staff and students helped the school use technology to advance learning. "We worked very closely with our staff to make sure everyone was confident about bridging the digital divide that existed here," Upton said. "That was a crucial part of the process for us," she said.

Upton reports that she has seen an increase in the use of technology in the classrooms, and teachers have indicated they are more capable of designing and developing digital-age learning experiences and assessments. Her long-term vision for her school is to develop digital distant learning opportunities for students, teachers, parents and the community. Through distant learning technology, she hopes to offer foreign languages, project-based learning experiences with students from other counties, guest lectures and extended learning activities for students. "The financial support, coaching and mentoring through the SEEDS grant has enabled us to facilitate an authentic change at Evans Elementary," she said.

"We live in an age where students must be able to compete in a global society. Integrated technology will ensure students are capable of competing academically with the best in the world," explained Dr. Patricia Kusimo, president/CEO of The Education Alliance. "This program is helping to prepare today's students for tomorrow's global challenges," she said.

Evans Elementary received \$50,000 in SEEDS assistance from The Education Alliance during a two-year period to help meet the goals and objectives of its technology integration program.

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