



# VIEW*S* & VISIONS

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## Accepting the Challenge: Creating Change in the Classroom

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James G. Brown is the superintendent of Raleigh County Schools in West Virginia. Mr. Brown has 29 years of service in public education, with the past 17 spent in school administration as a principal, central office administrator, assistant director at the West Virginia State Department of Education and currently as a superintendent of schools.

In 2008, he became the assistant director in the Office of Special Programs at the West Virginia State Department of Education, in charge of special education compliance. In 2010, he was appointed by Dr. Steve Paine, state superintendent of schools, to serve as superintendent in the McDowell County School District, located in Welch, West Virginia.

He received his undergraduate degree from West Liberty State College in elementary education, with a specialization in special education and a master's degree from Marshall University in educational leadership.

*"Do not confine your children to your own learning, for they were born in another time."*

This Chinese proverb reminds us all that teaching and learning in a 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom must look different than ever before. The foundational practices of the West Virginia Next Generation Content Standards and Objectives require students to demonstrate learning at a much higher degree of authenticity than ever before. Within the Raleigh County school system, our teachers recognize future success hinges on their ability to change how teaching and learning occurs in their classrooms.

With renewed spirit, we accepted the challenge to change the face of our classrooms through a comprehensive technology integration initiative coined iRaleigh. This first-of-its-kind deployment in West Virginia came as the result of extensive planning and research of best practices that included support from the



educational division of Apple and collaboration with school districts across the nation.

Soon into the planning process, we learned that many school systems across the United States were on their second and third generation of 1:1 technology devices in the classroom. We took it upon ourselves to seek out those individuals who had firsthand knowledge of practices that were demonstrating improved outcomes for students. Most importantly, we committed to identifying a model that would impact the climate and





and to serve as mentors for our teachers. As a school system, we realize that true success will not come overnight and this is an evolving process. However, in the words of John Dewey:

*“If we teach as we taught yesterday, we rob our children of tomorrow.”* ∇

culture of our schools and exponentially increase student engagement. Our goal is to achieve the highest levels of technology integration as defined by the SAMR model (Substitution Augmentation Modification Redefinition), which reminds us that the lowest level of integration is simple substitution, resulting in limited to no impact.

Our expectation is that teachers will soon begin to augment and modify their delivery of instruction by incorporating technology into their teaching and students’ personalized learning. In time, we expect many will reach the highest level of efficacy – redefinition – which will have our students digitally creating and shaping their own learning.

Through an extensive learning process, we ultimately determined that an iPad holds the greatest potential to support our goals. Through a partnership with Apple, we have deployed more than 10,000 iPad devices to Raleigh County students and teachers at the start of the 2013-2014 school year. Students in grades 3-12 have been provided their own personal iPads, which will be used as a tool to enhance their learning 24/7. Second-grade students have been issued an iPad at a 1:2 ratio, which will be used to enhance their

learning during the academic day. Every kindergarten and first-grade classroom has, at its fingertips, iPad Minis at a 1:2 ratio. Preschool classrooms have been provided iPad Mini stations with five devices. Equally important, every teacher has been provided an iPad, MacBook Pro and an Apple TV.

Everyone involved with the iPad deployment in our district will tell you this process was exhilarating and rewarding. By the same token, we recognize the mere issuance of a technology device will have little to do with improving outcomes for students. The real work lies ahead, as we begin to provide our teachers with the necessary tools to effectively augment and modify their teaching. The research is very clear; in order for our practices to reach a level of fidelity, we must provide high-quality, sustained, embedded professional development.

As such, we recently opened our iRaleigh Technology Training Center. This state-of-the-art training center will provide professional development to administrators, teachers, parents and the community at large. Our team of technology integration specialists has been charged with providing training and modeling best practices in the classroom