

Introduction to the Ribbon Cutting for
Classrooms for the Future
Michael Wagman, Director of Technology

Welcome and thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules to be with us this afternoon. What you are going to see today strikes me personally as the early 20th century meets the early 21st century. A few days ago, I saw a class set of laptop computers out on those small individual student desk/chair combinations, not too unlike the old wooden ones of a hundred years ago. The contrast was striking. We are in transition, an awkward stage of remaking education and the way we engage students around curricular content. The equipment you are about to see quite literally was just deployed earlier this week. The teachers, coach, all of us are in various stages of professional development in the effective use of this technology. We have not gotten around to *furniture for the future* yet but I do think that is important, too.

Springfield has had a long and consistent commitment to the use of educational technology. Thanks to the Governor, State Legislature, and Pennsylvania Department of Education's *Classrooms for the Future* (C4F) Initiative, what we in Springfield have been committed to achieving has been given a tremendous boost. What is that commitment? Well, what is our mission?

Ensure that all students are:

High achieving

Socially and ethically responsible

Self-directed and productive through a high performing, unified and aligned learning community.

A learning community implies collaboration. The technology you are going to see facilitates collaboration among students, students and teachers and teachers and teachers.

Since the age of the home computer and the advances in digital media, schools are often the lowest tech part of a student's day. We intend to leverage the technologies you are about to see and which many of our students use in so many other contexts over the course of life in the early part of this century to deliver curriculum in engaging ways. We are going to ask students to demonstrate competencies in authentic ways with authentic audiences and to do what the technology now allows, to contribute what they know to the larger community of learners here and elsewhere.

I am talking here about relevancy in the lives of our students, I am talking about high standards for achievement, and I am talking about productivity and teaching social and ethical responsibility in real world settings. I am talking about the ability

to bring the world to the classroom and with laptop computers and the school-wide wireless technology we are on the cusp of deploying, giving our students the ability to move out of the classroom and computer lab and remain connected to the world of electronic resources.

We seek through this grant and in our local commitment of resources to give teachers the tools and professional development to use technology as a vehicle for skill analysis and development, differentiated instruction to meet the needs of students where they are and to allow students to leverage their own creativity to demonstrate content mastery.

As we proceed into the three of our four classrooms in transition thanks to this grant, you will meet and talk with our students. We will show you some of the equipment purchased through the C4F grant and talk with our teachers who volunteered to be early adopters and, in turn will help us build internal capacity to provide ongoing professional development across the faculty. I ask you to keep in mind, however, that Springfield, thanks to the vision of many of the people in this room, is making similar commitments in special education, in our library and science department as examples. With the possibility of ongoing state support in Year 2 of this grant, our continued commitment in local funding, our strategies for long-term

sustainability and the dedication of the grant coach, teachers, administrators, Board of School Directors and my technology staff (all with whom I am very proud to be associated), we can transcend classrooms for the future and truly become a school for the future.