

# VITAL News

Virginia Initiative for Technology and Administrative Leadership



## *If I Were a Principal*

# Reading Together to Grow Together

*I saw a video awhile back that included the story of a principal in Colorado who had helped her school make great improvements. At one point in the video, one of the teachers commented that when she heard a new principal was coming to the school, she was unimpressed, thinking that nothing would change. She admitted that she was a little more impressed when the principal, prior to her arrival, sent each teacher a packet of articles to read. But it was only when the principal actually referred to the articles during their first faculty meeting, that the teacher realized things were going to change.*

*This story illustrates how important professional reading and reflection can be to help move a school forward. It is not enough, however, just to pass an article around with a check-off sheet; instead, if professional reading is to be taken seriously, there must be a time for discussion and reflection. Teachers will appreciate readings that are as relevant and practical as possible. This month, I suggest several sources for finding appropriate articles to share with your faculty and encourage you to make time to read together.*

*Teachers College Record from Columbia University is available online. Registration is required, but access is free. Each month, the website features articles from the print edition and currently they are presenting articles from their special issue dealing with the*

*50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Brown vs. the Board of Education. The website includes a well-organized archive of previous articles that cover almost every conceivable topic in education from special education to technology to curriculum to assessment. There are book reviews and a community discussion board as well. You can find Teachers College Record at <http://tcrecord.org>.*

*I have featured the Center for Applied Research in Educational Technology (CARET) in this newsletter before, but it is worth another mention. This website sponsored by the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) feature summaries of research articles, often with a link to the full article online. In addition, users can browse by questions related to student learning, curriculum and instruction and other topics and the answers provide a synthesis of current research. CARET is an excellent place to find relevant, practical reading related to technology in education and can be found at <http://caret.iste.org>.*

*Finally, take some time to browse the articles and videos at the George Lucas Education Foundation's website. GLEF features cutting edges uses of technology fused with innovative curriculum and instruction. Their newsletter, Edutopia, will become a full-fledged magazine this fall, and they are currently offering free subscriptions. Visit GLEF at <http://www.glef.org>.*

*Happy Reading,  
Karen*

## Hampton School Featured on Apple Website

VITAL has spent a lot of time in Hampton over the past two years, working with administrators on a variety of technology related issues. So, we were very excited to see Lindsay Middle School featured on Apple's education website. The article focused on Lindsay's laptop program begun in the 2001-2002 school year.

While the article is generally interesting, it should be of particular note for any schools considering their own laptop initiative as it outlines in detail the program Lindsay implemented and includes tips for other schools. The article recommends starting small and planning for future funding. It also suggests including the community in creative ways to help with

funding.

Perhaps, most importantly, the article focuses on providing funding for ongoing professional development. If there is one lesson we have all learned throughout the past decade of integrating technology that is that just providing technology does not ensure its use and that includes handing every student and teacher a laptop. Ongoing, high-quality professional development is a must. Experts suggest that 30% of the budget for any initiative should be earmarked for professional development.

You can read more about Lindsay Middle School's program at the [Apple website](#).

## Science Probes and PDAs: The Perfect Pairing

When most people hear the word computer, they picture a typical desktop machine complete with monitor, keyboard, and mouse. But as we move further into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, "computer" increasingly means much more. For instance, personal digital assistants, also called PDAs or handhelds, often have more computing power packed into their compact package than an average computer of just five years ago. And while most people think of a PDA as simply a glorified address book and calendar, when coupled with scientific probes and sensors, these handheld devices become powerful additions to the science classroom. Data collection and analysis becomes easy both in the classroom and during field trips.

In most cases, adding science probes and sensors to your handhelds involves purchasing an adapter that fits onto the handheld device and that can then be used with a variety of sensors and probes. Software is installed on both your handheld and your desktop computer to facilitate sharing the data that is collected.

If your school is interested in exploring the use of science probes and handhelds, we recommend three starting places: [Pasco](#), [Vernier](#), and [ImagiWorks](#). All three companies offer a variety of packages for schools that include the adapter, software and a wide selection of probes and sensors.

### *Quick Picks*

#### **Internet Archive Preserves the Past**

With websites disappearing and appearing every day, the Internet may seem like a difficult thing to preserve. But that's the goal of the [Internet Archive](#). Founded in 1996 to build an Internet library, the Archive is working with other organizations including the Smithsonian and the Library of Congress to preserve the web for the future. To give just one example, these organizations are preserving the websites from the 1996 Presidential campaign, the first to use the Internet.

The archive includes text, video, and audio as well as the Wayback Machine, which allows you to see what website used to look like.