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DOD COMPUTERS FOR LEARNING PROGRAM

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Providing Computers to Local Schools Through the DoD Computers for Learning Program

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District Technology Supervisor Ryan Stockton of Ohio's Minford Local School District shakes the hand of DLA Disposition Services Property Disposal Specialist Cindy Anderson as he prepares to load up 1,300 excess laptops that no longer met DoD security requirements. The lot, originally valued at \$800,000, allowed his district to have a dedicated device for every student.

— Photo Courtesy of Minford Local School District

FOR CLASSROOMS

PROVIDING COMPUTERS TO LOCAL SCHOOLS THROUGH THE DOD COMPUTERS FOR LEARNING PROGRAM

Story by Jake Joy, DLA Disposition Services Public Affairs

St. Kevin School in Warwick, Rhode Island, serves about 250 pupils from pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. In November 2017, its students and staff dedicated an academic learning lab outfitted with new laptops, docking stations and keyboards, and upgraded their classroom computers.

The dedication of a computer lab at a primary school, on its own, is not particularly attention-grabbing. What is notable about St. Kevin School is that it snagged 50 unopened laptops and peripheral hardware from nearby Quonset Air National Guard Base—for free.

The DoD Computers For Learning program, created by executive order in 1996, allows the Defense Logistics Agency's property disposal professionals to authorize and coordinate the donation of used and excess Department of Defense commercial technology to educational institutions like St. Kevin. The 321 schools currently enrolled pay nothing but the cost of transportation and possibly refurbishment, and taxpayers get extended use from computers that may no longer meet DoD's always-evolving security and software requirements.

From Guam to South Carolina; from tiny, 65-student Cascade High School in Montana to 2,500-student Tampa Bay Technical High School in Florida; private, public, parochial schools and educational nonprofits serving K-12 students all have the opportunity to take advantage

of technology the U.S. military can no longer use. Participants received more

than \$16 million in computers and related equipment through the program in the past three fiscal years.

Like many participating institutions, St. Kevin School's CFL awareness came about through word of mouth. Air Force Maj. Charlene Marshall, commander of Quonset's 143rd Communications Flight, reached out to the Rev. Robert Marciano, a retired military chaplain who pastors at St. Kevin. Marshall introduced him to the concept and recommended the school try to acquire some of the 150 excess computers that would soon be turned over to DLA Disposition Services.

St. Kevin's Paula Reynolds pursued the opportunity and reached out to DLA's Computers for Learning manager Jose Aguerot to determine the steps to

apply for the excess equipment.

"[Aguero] was our main point of contact, and he is a great representative of Disposition Services, and by extension, CFL," Reynolds said. "He explained the application process, provided step-by-step instructions, and emailed complementary documentation and links. He was easy to contact by both email and phone, and his responses to our requests for help or information were always thorough and timely. Once we received approval, he not only helped us navigate the system, but he also anticipated what our next obstacles would be — especially once we began searching for equipment and building wish lists."

Marciano is grateful for the program.



Cathy Conrady, Drummond Public Schools

Elementary students in Drummond, Oklahoma, work in their new computer lab. Their district acquired 114 desktop units from Vance Air Force Base via DLA. Older students installed operating systems, drivers, software and network switches to prepare the machines for reuse.

"I have always known firsthand the goodness of our military and our personnel, given my 36 years of service as an Air Force chaplain," he said. "But I was even more delighted to share that reality with our school children, faculty and staff when announcing the gift of these computers to our school," he said.

"Our prayers and gratitude to all who made this gift a reality for our children."

While military units can specify local or regional schools to receive their used or excess equipment, the schools must wait until the end of a standard 14-day property screening cycle to secure those items. During those 14 days, military units, DoD contractors and customers from a handful of special categories can also requisition the items. But whatever remains available at the end of those two weeks, the schools may take.

"The laptop computers given to St. Kevin School have been a true blessing," said Principal David Irving. "The teachers are able to use this lab in a variety of ways. Whether it is a student typing a science lab report or a student practicing his or her multiplication facts, these computers are put to good use every day."



Tommy Gentry, of Georgia's Irwin School District, loads 45 desktop computers donated from Moody Air Force Base with DLA's help.



Photo Courtesy Mart Intermediate School District

Near the start of the 2016 school year, Cindy Anderson, a property disposal specialist at DLA Disposition Services in Susquehanna, Pennsylvania, received word that nearly 6,000 DoD laptops and roughly 2,500 desktop computers would not be compatible with mandatory operating systems updates and had been declared excess. Anderson said some of the units ultimately went to law enforcement and other qualified customers, but one of her first calls was to Aguero, to get CFL participants interested. Aguero sent an email informing all the schools of the opportunity and received responses from participants in a variety of states.

Among the fortunate recipients was the Mishawaka School District in Indiana, which gathered up 1,200 laptops and 500 desktop units originally valued at \$900,000. Ryan Stockton, district technology supervisor for Ohio's Minford Local School District, quickly rented a 22-foot truck and drove seven hours to pick up 1,300 laptops, valued at more than \$800,000. The district expressed

Computer maintenance students in Mart, Texas, re-image and test diagnostics on 56 used military laptops they received from a DLA disposition site in Oklahoma.

thanks to DoD, the agency and CFL, and shared a district newsletter article that explained the impact of the donation to their local students:

"Minford will now be able to achieve the coveted 1:1 status," the district explained in the newsletter. "That means they will have enough devices that any student in their district will be able to have computer access any time they need it with no wait and no restrictions. This is a huge deal in an ever-changing education landscape where technology is tightly woven into everything we do. Without equitable access, it is very difficult to implement and integrate technology to its fullest potential. That barrier is now broken in Minford and at a minimal cost."

Schools routinely find value in not just the new but in used technology as well. Hard drives are regularly removed from military computers before disposition. That was fine for the

Drummond School District in Oklahoma.

"Installing operating systems, drivers, software and network switches," in 114 donated desktop computers made its high school technology students "pretty good at troubleshooting problems and they caught on fast," said Larry Conrady, a technology manager for Drummond.

A few hundred miles away, in the tiny Central Texas town of Mart, district Technology and Library Services Director John Luedke picked up 56 computers originally worth \$178,000 from DLA's McAlester, Oklahoma, site. Luedke teaches a basic computer maintenance class and said the machines would benefit the end users after they gave students hands-on learning as they cleaned and prepared the units for use.

"We normally image our computers and then run several tests on them and then ... check them out to students," Luedke said. "This program is the only way that I could possibly put a nice laptop in the hands of my students. My tech budget is low, but I feel that with a little extra effort and thinking outside the box sometimes, my students will have more opportunities for success. This program is a godsend."

For schools interested in signing up for CFL and screening available property, the first step is to navigate to the Computers for Learning tab on the DLA Disposition Services website. Once inside, instructions for signing a memorandum of agreement and sending it to the agency will allow the school to create an access account for DLA's online property-screening tool. Comprehensive instructions on account registration and website access are provided once applicants are enrolled.

CFL advocates point out that any military unit can coordinate with its chain of command and then make sure schools in their local area learn how to take part in the program.

Editor's Note –

Parts of this story were originally written by Paula Reynolds and other teachers and officials at St. Kevin School.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT
THE DOD COMPUTERS FOR LEARNING PROGRAM,
visit: www.dla.mil/dispositionservices/offers/reutilization/CFL



Photo Courtesy St. Kevin School

Students at St. Kevin School in Providence, Rhode Island, test new laptop computers donated from a command at nearby Quonset Air National Guard Base. Computers for Learning allows DLA to help public, private and parochial schools and educational non-profits acquire used and excess DoD information technology free of charge.

