



Public Media and Education

In the words of our statute, “[I]t is in the public interest to encourage ...the use of such [public] media for instructional, educational, and cultural purposes.” The Act also directs CPB to make program production grants to various types of producers, including “producers of national children’s educational programming.”

Education continues to be a core value of the public broadcasting community, as it has been since its inception. This fact is underscored by the results of a comprehensive CPB-commissioned survey of public television stations undertaken by SRI International. The study documents the educational services stations are providing directly to their communities. These services, which extend beyond the broadcast, range from special in person reading programs for parents and childcare providers; to professional development resources for teachers; to online activities designed to spark student learning in subjects such as science and math. The survey collected information from 165 public television licensees (representing over 300 stations) across the country. It focused on the off-air educational services that the stations provide to their communities, which often go unheralded. The survey challenged stations to describe their education programs, audiences, technology and how they evaluate the implementation and impact of their important education-related work.

CPB’s mission underscores the critical role of our work to “provide programs and services which inform, enlighten and enrich the public.” For over 40 years, public broadcasting stations have made a robust and vital contribution to education and an informed and strengthened civil society.

Below are examples of CPB’s education-related initiatives:

- ***Math and Science Initiative***
CPB is laying the groundwork for an educational initiative to strengthen the math and science skills of America’s young people. We have begun by assessing math and science resources already available in the system and by consulting with station leaders and educational professionals about the need for additional content. In FY 2008, CPB funded projects designed to support the active learning of math and science at home, in school, and in the community including investments in new multiplatform content and partnerships with national organizations such as the U.S. FIRST Robotics Competition.
- ***American History and Civics***
The American History and Civics Initiative will improve the knowledge and understanding of history and civics among middle and high school students. The Initiative will employ an array of multimedia and multi-platform approaches to delivering educational content. In 2007, CPB selected seven projects to receive research and development funding and retained WGBH in Boston as “initiative



manager” to help administer this complex project. In early 2009, CPB will provide production funding for the most successful two or three projects as demonstrated by the research and development phase.

- ***Ready To Learn***

The goal of Ready To Learn (RTL), funded by a grant to CPB from the U.S. Department of Education, is to use the power of television to raise the reading levels of children ages 2-8 who live in high poverty environments. Today, RTL is a partnership with PBS, WGBH-TV (Boston), WTTW-TV (Chicago), Sesame Workshop, Out of the Blue Productions, leading researchers on reading and public television stations. Among other milestones, in 2008, we launched two new multi-platform children’s series: *Martha Speaks* and *The New Electric Company*. These series join *Super Why* and *Word World*, which premiered in 2007.

Below are examples of education-related initiatives ongoing within the public media system:

Early Childhood Education

- Last year, CPB found that 66 public television licensees in 33 states plus Puerto Rico are currently working with local Head Start agencies.
- *A Place of Our Own/Los Ninos en Su Casa*: This program, produced by KCET-TV in Los Angeles, combines two broadcast series (one in English and one in Spanish), hands-on workshops within the community, and an interactive website to address ways in which at-home childcare providers and parents can help children, ages 5 and younger, acquire cognitive, social, emotional, and physical competencies, while at the same time nurturing language, literacy, and numeric development.

K-12

- *“PBS Kids GO!” Broadband*: CPB has invested \$14,385,000 over three years to support the development, launch, and distribution of PBS Kids Go! broadband channel – an integrated, digital, online media service for children ages 6-8 and beyond. PBS Kids GO! is a safe destination for kids where they can watch full episodes and short-form clips, play games related to their favorite shows and episodes, and customize content and create their own playlists all for free. Teachers and parents will also benefit by being able to search specific curriculum areas (science, math, literature) and kid related themes. There is no existing service in the commercial world with fun and learning as a goal.
- *KAET ASSET (Phoenix, AZ)*: Since 1983, ASSET – Arizona School Services through Educational Technology – has helped Arizona K-12 educators integrate technology into their classrooms. What began as an experiment to cost-effectively distribute instructional video statewide, has grown into an organization that offers a broad array of services for educators. ASSET is a self-supported department of Eight/KAET public television located at Arizona State University. ASSET takes great pride in collaborating with business and non-profit organizations to bring the best possible resources to Arizona educators. ASSET has a primary focus on customizing local and national PBS content for Arizona classrooms.



- *STEM Collaborative*: In the “STEM” Collaborative (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), Maryland Public Television (MPT), Alabama Public Television (APTV), Arkansas Public Television (AETN), and Kentucky Public Television (KET) are working collaboratively to build a library of digital education material for middle school math students. This important digital content will be useful to middle school students in those states and across the country. Finished resources are due July 2009 and will be shared with the system. STEM Content Investments include: *Design Squad* (WGBH, Boston, MA), a new PBS reality engineering competition series targeting 9 to 12 year-olds; *It's a Big Big World* Educational Outreach Campaign (PBS, Arlington, VA), an innovative new science-focused PBS preschool series, targeting children ages 3-6; *Wild Kratts* (Kratt Brothers Company, LaMotte, VT), a groundbreaking STEM television series – the first animated, story-driven, animal-based science series and web site for kids aged 6-9 years old.
- *Ideastream/WVIZ*: Ideastream, a combined public radio/TV station in Cleveland, Ohio, is the convener of RAISE (The Regional Alliance for Informal Science Education), an alliance of informal science providers (science centers, nature centers and museums) in Northeast Ohio. It was created to provide a vehicle for its member organizations to coordinate their collective education resources in order to advance the teaching and learning of science and to promote science literacy within the community at large. Its goal is to make a difference in the way science is taught, presented, and learned.
- *Iowa Communications Network*: Iowa Public Television operates the Iowa Communications Network(ICN)/K-12 Connections – the country’s premier fiber-optic network, committed to continued enhancement of distance learning and providing Iowans with convenient, equal access to education and government. The Network makes it possible for Iowans, physically separated by location, to interact in an efficient, creative, and cost-effective manner. Through partnerships with education, medicine, the judicial system, government agencies, and the National Guard, the Network brings live, full-motion video to 744 classrooms around Iowa, located in schools, National Guard armories, libraries, hospitals, and federal and state government offices. ICN services include video over IP, voice and high-speed data.
- *KQED QUEST*: KQED-TV’s (San Francisco) QUEST is a new multimedia series about the people behind San Francisco Bay Area science and environmental issues and how their work is changing the way we live. QUEST’s geographic coverage spans from Mendocino to Monterey and from Sacramento to Santa Clara, and focuses on nine content areas: astronomy, biology, chemistry, engineering, environment, geology, health, physics and weather. QUEST utilizes all of the station’s media platforms, educational resources and extraordinary partnerships. The program includes a half-hour weekly HD television program, weekly radio segments, an innovative website and unique education guides. At the center of QUEST is a website that presents radio and television content, along with many unique features.

Higher Education

- *Virtual High School/GED (Las Vegas, NV)*: In Clark County, Nevada over 10,000 people are progressing through the GED program, and an annual graduation ceremony is held for approximately 1,000 graduates. The School District’s Department of Alternative Education estimates that 400 of the 1,000 graduates used the GED materials from



- Vegas PBS. Vegas PBS has worked with nonprofit organizations including Opportunity Village (intellectually disabled adults), Shade Tree Shelter (abused women), Salvation Army and Nevada Partners (neighborhood development and workforce training) to offer the GED materials within their existing programs. Since 1996, over 15,000 students have been enrolled in Vegas PBS Distance Education, GED and Alternative Education programs. Also, Vegas PBS' "Virtual High School" launched in 1996, by request of the local Clark County School District (CCSD), to help lower their 9 percent dropout rate. In the first year 238 students enrolled in the four "most failed" high school courses. As of 2007 the program expanded to include a catalog of 60 courses offered via VHS, DVD, on demand broadband and live interactive Internet offerings. In the last three years, between 5,000 and 7,000 were served. In 2005, a parallel program offering online Advanced Placement courses was joined with the Vegas PBS offerings to create the CCSD Virtual High School. Last year all but one of the 38 comprehensive four year high schools in Clark County (the nation's 5th largest school district) had between one and 22 graduates who received their degree as a result of taking two or more Virtual High School classes.
- *WHYY/Philadelphia*: WHYY-TV received a grants from the U.S. Department of Labor and the Wachovia Foundation to continue the translation into Spanish of the GED Connection series produced by KET. Through a CPB Digital Funds grant they plan to distribute this translated version on multiple platforms including a digital TV channel, datacasting and web. Also, WHYY's "College Anywhere" service is a partnership between the station and over a dozen accredited colleges and universities in the Philadelphia region to provide videostreaming of college level, credit bearing courses to working adults. WHYY has long been a leader with local colleges – particularly community colleges – in providing distance learning opportunities.
 - *University Licensee Collaboration*: Three university licensees, WPSU (Penn State), WOSU (Ohio State) and WPT (University of Wisconsin), will be collaborating by offering university-based content through traditional and new media platforms. The three main themes of the content will be economics, education and health. The goal would be to offer a multicast block of content and to make it available via video on-demand. In addition, the project would allow for other university licensees to participate in the so-called "University Place" project to showcase their content as well.