

AVOCA WINS PRESTIGIOUS NATIONAL AWARD IN TECHNOLOGY

In May, Avoca District #37 was awarded a prestigious national award for its innovative use of educational technology throughout the entire organization. The National School Boards Association (NSBA) named Avoca a 2008 Technology Leadership Salute District; an award it bestows to only three school districts nationwide each year. Avoca will receive the award at the annual NSBA Technology Conference (dubbed the "T+L² Conference," which stands for Technology, Learning and Leadership). The T+L² Conference will be held in Seattle this coming October. Superintendent Joseph Porto will deliver a brief acceptance speech, and a video montage of Avoca's technology plan highlights will be presented to the audience at a morning keynote address session of the conference.

Technology Leadership Salute Districts are school communities that:

- Display exemplary use of technology as a tool for learning;
- Infuse technology at the point of instruction to make learning come alive for students;
- Provide seamless communication within the district, between school and home, and beyond the school community;
- Set an example for other school districts to follow and are willing to mentor others toward similar goals; and
- Are innovative leaders in the creative use of educational technology.

Hundreds of school districts from across the country applied for the NSBA Technology Leadership Salute District award in 2008. After reviewing the applications, which include both a written component and a video summary, the NSBA award committee determined the three winning districts for 2008: Avoca School District #37 (Wilmette, IL); Genesee Intermediate School District (Flint, MI); and Minnetonka Public Schools (Minnetonka, MN). In particular, Avoca was recognized for the following attributes:

- 4th-8th grade 1:1 laptop program;
- 1st-3rd Promethean interactive white boards in all primary classrooms;
- "Anytime, anywhere access" and consistent integration of technology within classroom instruction;
- Remote access with the parent community (students and parents may connect to the Avoca network from home);
- Parent electronic access to grades, assignments, and projects in grades 6th-8th;
- Paperless communications within the district and between the district and the parent community; and
- Paperless school board meetings.

When Dr. Porto accepts the 2008 Technology Leadership Salute District award at the NSBA T+L² Technology Conference in October, it will be an honor that the entire Avoca school community played a role in achieving. It is a tribute to the vision, leadership, and skills of the school board, administration, teaching staff, support staff, parents, and students. With this honor also comes responsibility. Avoca plans to continue hosting site visits and demonstrations for visiting educators from around the country. In addition, the administration, staff, and school board members plan to make presentations and conduct workshops at local and national conferences next year and into the future.