Mitchel Resnick from the MIT Media Lab gave a keynote at the Boston Tech Forum conference this past April, and described the critical attributes of this current generation of students as thinking creatively, reasoning systematically, and working collaboratively. VHS believes that college and career readiness and the ability to network and socialize through a variety of technologies should be added to that list of critical attributes. We believe strongly in developing those attributes in VHS students and are re-examining how the VHS program supports this development. This effort will involve a multi-pronged approach which will include revising the VHS course design and delivery standards, bringing existing VHS courses to those new standards, helping VHS teachers develop additional online teaching skills through ongoing professional development, expanding our online professional development offerings for blended classroom teachers, and developing and offering more curriculum resources for both online and blended teaching.

VHS standards: Our next generation design and course delivery standards will focus on updating VHS’s co-synchronous e-learning model in a variety of ways, including the integration of web 2.0 tools and resources into the student learning process. Co-synchronous is a term that VHS has coined to describe our model of cohort-based, online learning. Co-synchronous course design focuses on collaboration, cooperation, communication and community. The expanding use of web 2.0 tools in VHS courses will help students learn how to network, collaborate and learn using a variety of resources such as the wikis and blogs that many VHS teachers are already using in their courses. We will continue to foster the development of critical, creative and systematic thinking and reasoning skills through course design standards that foster a student-centered instructional approach. Through online discussions, challenge-based learning activities, and use of a variety of assessments VHS students will demonstrate mastery of the curriculum.

Gold-copy courses: Last year, we began the Gold-copy course process to maintain quality of VHS courses across all course sections and course teachers, while also enabling VHS teachers to personalize their courses in the critical areas of course discussions, feedback/interaction with students and the course home page. The Gold-copy course process will continue this year with the inclusion of our new course design standards into the course revision process.

Professional development: This summer, we released our new professional development site and VHS staff will be blogging regularly and providing a variety of professional development resources for VHS teachers and site coordinators on the site. Over the past few years, VHS has been offering professional development courses for classroom teachers that want to develop their blended teaching skills. We’ve had great success with these courses, and offer them at reduced prices for VHS member schools. This year we will continue to add to our catalog of professional development offerings for classroom teachers, with the focus on continuing to deepen blended teaching skills for teachers and the evaluation of blended teaching and learning for school administrators. Watch our website for more additions to our professional development course catalog!

Happy Birthday VHS!! This is the start of VHS’s 15th year of offering online courses, and it has been a tremendous joy and learning experience for me and the VHS staff to foster and support the amazing phenomenon of online teaching and learning. Thanks to all of you—school administrators, site coordinators, teachers, students, parents and community members, for your support, enthusiasm and willingness to work with VHS to develop and maintain quality leadership in online education. Have a great school year!
Virtual High School Global Consortium to become...

The VHS Collaborative
One Click. One World. Endless Possibilities.

At VHS our vision is to inspire, ignite, and deepen learning by opening a new world of online educational opportunities to students and teachers no matter where they live. Our programs and services prepare students and teachers academically, technologically, and globally to live and work in the 21st century. We believe that collaboration is the key to creating rich and engaging learning experiences while optimizing the use of scarce educational resources.

Since launching our Virtual High School program in 1995, we have reached tens of thousands of high school students with interesting and challenging courses that helped them grow as individuals and prepare for college and careers. We have brought together people from over 700 schools to share resources and ideas and offer more options to students. We have prepared educators around the world to use new tools and technologies to enhance learning experiences both online and in the classroom. We have partnered with schools and government organizations to create innovative new programs that filled gaps in curriculum and offered new opportunities to students that could not be offered through their local schools. And we have worked with professional organizations and teachers’ associations to develop standards that would ensure the quality and effectiveness of online programs.

In short, we have become much more than just a Virtual High School. However, our name has not grown with us. Few people who hear our name realize that we offer gifted and talented courses for middle school students, professional development programs for teachers at all grade levels, or custom course development and private offerings to meet the needs of individual school districts. Our name fails to suggest that we regularly work on grant projects, are supporting schools with their blended learning initiatives, and are helping to set the vision and standards for online education in the 21st century.

That is why we are changing our name from Virtual High School Global Consortium to The VHS Collaborative. The name is simpler, broader, and more recognizable. It connects us with our heritage as a pioneer in supplemental online education for high school students, while encompassing our full range of educational services. It also emphasizes our commitment to collaboration and cooperation—the cornerstone of our model and beliefs.

Stay tuned over the next few months as we introduce our new name, launch a new website, update our marketing materials, and refresh our image. Don’t worry, we will stay true to our roots while making room for all of the great new things still to come. Thank you for your continued support.

Debbie Kenny, VHS Director of Sales and Marketing

VHS Expands Course Offerings!

VHS is expanding its credit recovery and core course options.

Credit Recovery

In Spring 2012 VHS will be piloting a new credit recovery program ideal for students who struggle in a traditional classroom, have fallen behind in their work, or have missed school due to illness or personal issues. Students can take these 15 week, co-synchronous courses to recover a full year course in one semester. Options include English 9, 10, and 11, Algebra 1, Geometry, and Biology. Individual student enrollments are $450 per seat per semester. VHS member schools may enroll students in these courses as part of their annual membership.

Core Courses

VHS is expanding our core course options to meet the needs of schools that have one or more students who cannot participate in core courses at school for a variety of reasons. World language and other core subjects are now available through our partnership with Connections Learning. In addition, we will be adding more English, Math, History, and Science courses to the VHS catalog in the fall of 2012. Stay tuned, or contact your Account Manager for more information.

VHS Network

Liz Pape, President & CEO
Suzanne Harlow, Editor

VHS Network is published biannually to share the successes of the VHS community and to promote collaboration through the addition of schools and course offering opportunities.

VHS Network encourages contributions from VHS member schools, teachers, site coordinators, and students. Please send your ideas for contributions to:
Suzanne Harlow, Editor
sharlow@goVHS.org
978.450.0509

Our Mission

The mission of Virtual High School is to develop and deliver standards-based, student-centered online courses to expand students’ educational opportunities and 21st century skills and to offer professional development to teachers to expand the scope and depth of their instructional skills.

VHS Inc. is a nonprofit organization founded by The Concord Consortium and Hudson Public Schools of Massachusetts.

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In the News

Congratulations to VHS Veteran Teachers and Site Coordinators!

The following Virtual High School Global Consortium (VHS) teachers and site coordinators were recently recognized for reaching five or ten year milestones of participation with VHS.

TEN YEARS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>School/Location</th>
<th>Site Coordinator</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mike Ehhardt</td>
<td>Marshall School</td>
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<td>Janet Gay</td>
<td>Blue Mountain Union School</td>
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<td>Mary Bright</td>
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<td>Gary Whitehead</td>
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FIVE YEARS

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<td>Tracy Arnold</td>
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<td>Jonathan Baru</td>
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<td>Marcia Benvenuti</td>
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<td>Kathy Bonn</td>
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<td>Geraldine Bonneau</td>
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<td>Gail Canon</td>
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<td>Pauline Carulli</td>
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<td>Patrick Clifford</td>
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<td>Michele Iannello</td>
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<td>Scott Miller</td>
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<td>Connie Radtke</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joseph Ramirez</td>
<td>Notre Dame High School</td>
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Peter Sawyer          | Gilford High School                 |                  |
Sally Sessler         | Gilford High School                 |                  |
Chris Thompson        | Mount. Everett Regional High School  |                  |
Deborah Rice          | Petersburg High School              |                  |
Sheryl Wilkinson      | Glasgow Middle School               |                  |
Gregg Anderson        | Tantauqua Regional High School       |                  |
Jason Auclair         | Chicopee High School                |                  |
Rick Bagby            | Fairfield County ESC                 |                  |
Kathleen Chase        | Mount View High School              |                  |
Catherine Deblia      | Wheeler High School                 | North Stonington, CT |
Beth Bomvan           | Falcon High School                  |                  |
Michael Dring         | Wilton-Lynedborough Cooperative      |                  |
Gary Furlong          | Wilton High School                   |                  |
Lisa Guay             | Groveton High School                 |                  |
Susan Hardin          | Petersburg High School               |                  |
James Johnston        | Union Catholic Regional High School  |                  |
Theodore Kempinski    | Haverhill High School                |                  |
Anne Kennedy          | Holy Name High School                |                  |
Paul Macke            | St. Peter Marian Jr/Sr High School   |                  |
Kelly Markland        | Wahconah Regional High School        |                  |
Dorothy Maxwell       | Sacopee Valley High School           |                  |
Julie Muelbeins       | Smith Academy                        |                  |
Larissa Murphy        | Leominster High School               |                  |
Catherine Niedziela   | Hopkins Academy                      |                  |
Amy Palasia           | Two Rivers Magnet Middle School      |                  |
Cheryl Ray            | Parish Hill Middle High School       |                  |
Sheila Reed           | Bowdon High School                   |                  |
Linda Rountree        | Simsbury High School                 |                  |
Mary Beth Shultz       | Belpre High School                   |                  |
Kara Staunton-Shron   | Monument Mountain Regional High School |                  |
Julie Stratton        | Cape May County Technical School     |                  |
Amy Sunke             | Appleton eSchool                     |                  |
Richard Wilson        | Dumont High School                   |                  |
Heather Wood          | Palmyra High School                  |                  |
Karen Wood            | Northland Christian School           |                  |
Cherilyn Ziemer       | Northland Christian School           |                  |

Peter Sawyer          | Gilford, NH                         |                  |
Sally Sessler         | Gilford, NH                         |                  |
Chris Thompson        | Sheffield, MA                       |                  |
Deborah Rice          | Petersburg, AK                      |                  |
Sheryl Wilkinson      | Glasgow, KY                         |                  |
Gregg Anderson        | Fiskdale, MA                        |                  |
Jason Auclair         | Chicopee, MA                         |                  |
Rick Bagby            | Lancaster, OH                       |                  |
Kathleen Chase        | Thordemle, ME                       |                  |
Catherine Deblia      | North Stonington, CT                |                  |
Beth Bomvan           | Falmouth, ME                        |                  |
Michael Dring         | Wilton, CT                           |                  |
Gary Furlong          | Milton, VT                          |                  |
Lisa Guay             | Groveton, NH                         |                  |
Susan Hardin          | Petersburg, AK                      |                  |
James Johnston        | Scotch Plains, NJ                   |                  |
Theodore Kempinski    | Haverhill, ME                       |                  |
Anne Kennedy          | Worcester, MA                       |                  |
Paul Macke            | Worcester, MA                       |                  |
Kelly Markland        | Dalton, MA                          |                  |
Dorothy Maxwell       | Hiram, ME                            |                  |
Julie Muelbeins       | Hatfield, MA                         |                  |
Larissa Murphy        | Leominster, MA                       |                  |
Catherine Niedziela   | Hadley, MA                           |                  |
Amy Palasia           | East Hartford, CT                   |                  |
Cheryl Ray            | Chaplin, CT                          |                  |
Sheila Reed           | Bowdon, GA                           |                  |
Linda Rountree        | Simsbury, CT                         |                  |
Mary Beth Shultz       | Belpre, OH                           |                  |
Kara Staunton-Shron   | Great Barrington, MA                 |                  |
Julie Stratton        | Cape May, NJ                         |                  |
Amy Sunke             | Appleton, WI                         |                  |
Richard Wilson        | Dumont, NJ                           |                  |
Heather Wood          | Palmyra, NJ                          |                  |
Karen Wood            | Houston, TX                         |                  |
Cherilyn Ziemer       | Houston, TX                          |                  |

VHS believes...

that student-centered online courses can be designed and delivered to students to promote a high quality collaborative learning environment in which student exchange and interaction is a valued component of the instructional process.

that educational opportunity need not be limited by barriers of time and place and lack of qualified faculty. Rather, we believe that high-quality education is possible — today — for all students in all locations. Online education offers any school with Internet connectivity a wealth of trained, experienced faculty members qualified in numerous disciplines, for teaching a wide array of courses designed to meet the needs of all students. An innovative, standards-based curriculum delivered online offers diverse, exciting learning choices for students, and the opportunity and skills to participate in a national and global community.

that online teaching should augment rather than replace traditional classroom teaching. Virtual High School online courses are a proven, flexible solution for schools needing an expanded curriculum, teachers seeking new horizons, parents wanting more involvement with their children’s education, and a society grappling with ways to offer opportunity to all its citizens.

that the goals of education are advanced best by putting value and service first. When schools work together in a collaborative network such as VHS, they become part of an abundant and generous educational community that promotes the affordable sharing of professional resources.

continued on page 5
Step into the Virtual High School (VHS) Honors Anatomy and Physiology class and you’ll notice a strong sense of community among students. This cooperative learning engages students in science, encouraging them to share ideas, ask questions and think critically. Throughout the course students participate regularly in discussions and “lab meetings,” combine experimental results and share work in blogs and wikis, and collaborate through group projects as they explore the science of anatomy and physiology.

Engaging Discussions

As soon as students arrive in class they participate in a discussion with their peers about the importance of community in an online classroom and ways in which they can be active contributors to this community. This discussion encourages students to predict how a VHS course will be different from that of a traditional classroom as well as to consider how essential it is that they establish meaningful relationships with their peers. Students who have previously taken a VHS course share their experiences with a new set of classmates, while those new to Virtual High School express their initial thoughts on online learning. In the words of one student last spring, “A community builds the courage to express and to exchange ideas that is essential to learning…I can contribute to the online community by arguing, critiquing, complementing and supplementing the words of my peers. Online interaction will foster inter-learning and growth as a community.”

One student replied to a peer who described a research study suggesting a positive correlation between music and cardiovascular health. “This is quite interesting, I too, have never heard of this. However, now that I have I will be promoting listening to happy music. My family has a history of cardiovascular problems, even with music being only slightly beneficial, I’m going to let them know the news.” Not only are students sharing what they are learning with each other but the discussion is extending to their families as well.

Laboratory Investigations

Students share and discuss data throughout the course within different types of laboratory assignments. Whether it’s a dissection of a chicken leg, experiments to detect differences in respiratory and heart rates before and after exercise, or examining histology using the NIH imaging software ImageJ, students are collaborating every week. Using blogs, students share their experiences with dissection and building joints, and through wikis they combine their data to look for overall trends in class data on respiration and heart rate before and after exercise. Within discussion topics they share their questions, findings and interpretations of histology data in weekly ImageJ “lab meetings.” Like any lab meeting in traditional science settings, students learn that communicating concerns, data and ideas can lead to meaningful results and rewarding experiences.

In the second half of the course, students complete a lengthy “Anatomy and Physiology of Disease” project, where they join efforts with a few other classmates to describe the etiology and physiology of a disease of their choice. Each teammate conducts research, shares and discusses this research, and contributes to the creation of a webpage that includes text, images and multimedia. The project culminates in a “poster session” where students view each other’s projects and pose questions as well as field questions posed of their own projects, much like what one does in a poster session at a scientific conference.

Reflection

Toward the end of the course, students discuss potential careers associated with the field of anatomy and then have some fun sharing their “Top 10 Fascinating Facts in Anatomy.” They reflect on their collaborative experiences in the course during the last week. When asked what students liked the most about this course, one student replied, “I really liked being able to talk back and forth with other classmates through weekly discussions, because it gave me the feeling of being in an actual classroom where you would talk with your friends or the teacher in order to get more than one view on a situation.” and another stated, “Overall, my favorite thing about this class was meeting all of my classmates, and being able to work with other people that I have never worked with before.”

So just what do students gain from such a strong focus on collaboration in the VHS Anatomy and Physiology course? From a science perspective, students get a sense of the essential role that collaboration plays in science. Students learn how to communicate and work together, which requires them to be responsible, take initiative to be an active participant, plan ahead and express themselves clearly in writing using a variety of learning tools in a virtual environment. Whether they choose to pursue a career in science or not, students leave this Anatomy and Physiology course with valuable 21st century learning experience and collaborative skills that will help them succeed in whatever their future may hold.
Congratulations to VHS Veteran Teachers and Site Coordinators!

continued from page 3
1:1 initiatives are being adopted by many school systems across the country, putting technology into the hands of students to further their education. Burlington Public Schools in Burlington, Mass. is one of those school systems. Burlington is a small town of around 25,000 people located outside of Boston. The Burlington School District consists of four elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. Patrick Larkin is the principal at Burlington High School (BHS), a school of just over 1,100 students and 86 faculty members. He is also the author of Burlington Principal’s Blog, which highlights events that are going on at BHS, including the use of technology in the school.

Please tell us a little about your 1:1 initiative. When and why did you decide to undertake this project??

We decided a couple of years ago that we wanted to move to a 1:1 school where every student would have a web-enabled device in order to replicate the world in which our students will be entering when they leave school. While the world outside of schools is changing at a phenomenal pace, it is unfortunate that the world inside of schools has changed very little over the past century.

What was your research process for picking the technology you would use in your school?

We formed a 1:1 implementation committee made up of teachers, students, parents, community members, and administrators to construct a plan for our 1:1 deployment, and set our sights on the fall of 2011 (this fall). It is interesting to note that the iPad did not exist when we started our 1:1 discussions regarding the best device for BHS. Our team looked at a number of issues including cost, battery life, and ease of use.

What were your deciding factors?

While there is no perfect device, once the iPad was introduced it became clear that it was the best choice for BHS. While we are discussing the idea of moving to a “Bring Your Own Device” (BYOD) model in the future, we thought it was important to have every student with the same device to start our 1:1 initiative. We felt that the idea of a teacher having twenty four students in a class with four or five different devices would be a difficult entry point.

How will you be implementing the initiative and can you describe its scope?

After two years of planning, we distributed iPads to every high school student. All of our teachers are using web-enabled tools in their classrooms and some have gone paperless. We do not plan on purchasing any new sets of textbooks and would prefer to spend our funds to support teachers in the development of digital content. In fact, we have started a collaborative with other local school districts to bring teachers together by subject area and offer support as they compile digital content into a shared wiki that can then be used to create e-publications.

Will there be online components for your face-to-face courses? What kind of activities will be online?

While we hope to offer some hybrid courses in the near future, right now we are all face-to-face with the majority of teachers also using online spaces to post content and interact with students. We hope to work with the state on the issue of making up lost days due to weather because we feel we can still have quality learning taking place when our kids are not physically in school. Of course you understand that at Virtual High School (VHS), but our state’s department of education has some concerns and questions about where and when learning happens.

What are you hoping the benefits of this initiative will be for your school and its students?

Since all of our schools have mission statements that say we teach citizenship, we think it is important to include digital citizenship as part of that mission. In fact, we believe that you cannot say you are teaching citizenship in the year 2011, if you are not teaching digital citizenship. We feel it is important that our students are able to utilize social media tools constructively to help them follow their passions and create a positive digital footprint.

Schools that just deny access to these amazing tools are doing their students a disservice. What would we say about a doctor who denied his patients access to the most modern technologies in assessing and curing illnesses? Denying student and teacher access to tools that can provide increased relevance and engagement to learning should be considered “educational malpractice.” We think that our students will have an advantage over students from schools that are not showing students how to use these amazing collaborative learning tools to their benefit.
How will this initiative assist your VHS students?

In the past our students had to go to the lab to work on their VHS courses and now they can work on their VHS work 24-7 whether they are in school, at Starbucks, or at home. This is an advantage for our students to be able to continue their learning regardless of time and place. These are obstacles that have been of concern in the past.

Do you have any advice for other schools that are looking into implementing a 1:1 initiative?

Schools need to have a plan to increase student access to digital tools. They can start this plan immediately and it takes some time to get staff, parents, and community members comfortable with this transition. I think that a starting point is to lighten up on rules that do not allow cell phone use for educational purposes in the classroom, while at the same time providing teachers professional development in the area of technology integration. We have a number of our resources tabbed at the top of my blog patrickmlarkin.com and we welcome feedback, questions, and visits. Please e-mail me at larkin@bpsk12.org if we can help.

If we are going to improve our schools so that they continue to be relevant learning environments which keep our students competitive globally then we need to work together on this important effort.

September ushered in a new school year and a new place for VHS site coordinators, teachers, and staff to collaborate, share ideas, and learn. The Community of Virtual Educators, or COVE provides a comprehensive, one-stop professional learning network for the VHS community. There are discussion forums, articles, blogs, tutorials, and more. Always wanted to know more about Twitter? Check out the “Tweetorial”! Want to swap ideas on using wikis with your VHS colleagues? Head to the “In Your Classroom” discussion forum and post your thoughts and questions. The goal is to make this a fun, practical resource for everyone in the VHS community.

We hope you take some time to explore COVE and join in the forums. We look forward to partnering with you to expand educational options for students and educators.

Welcome New VHS Member Schools!

Welcome to the following schools that joined the Virtual High School collaborative starting this fall.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Shelton Public Schools</td>
<td>Shelton CT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun Valley High School</td>
<td>Aton PA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hampshire Regional High School</td>
<td>Westhampton MA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avon High School</td>
<td>Avon CT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Branford High School</td>
<td>Branford CT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Academy of Aerospace and Engineering</td>
<td>Hartford CT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Briar Middle School</td>
<td>Sandusky OH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perkins High School</td>
<td>Sandusky OH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claremont Academy</td>
<td>Worcester MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Ann Central School</td>
<td>Fort Ann NY</td>
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VHS Conferences and Events

VHS will be attending and hosting the following conferences and information sessions this year. For the most up-to-date events listing, including local conferences, please visit our website at: http://www.govhs.org/Pages/AboutUs-Conf

Maine Principals’ Association - Grappling with Change
November 17-18, 2011
Annual Conference
Holiday Inn By The Bay
88 Spring Street
Portland, ME 04101
http://www.mpa.cc/pdf/FallConference11.pdf

NYS CATE - New York State Association for Computers and Technology in Education
November 20-22, 2011
Annual Conference
Rochester Riverside Convention Center
123 East Main Street
Rochester, NY 14604
Presentation - Going Global with 21st Century Teaching by Susan Leavens, Supervisor of Instructional Technology
http://www.nyscate.org/conferences.cfm?subpage=483

AESA - Association of Educational Service Agencies
November 30 - December 3, 2011
Annual Conference
Broadmoor Hotel
1 Lake Avenue
Colorado Springs, CO 80906
Presentation - Blended Learning in Action by Colleen Worrell, Manager of Professional Development

NCEA - National Catholic Educators Assoc.
April 11 - 13, 2012
Annual Conference
John B. Hynes Veterans Memorial Convention Center
900 Boylston Street
Boston, MA, 02210
http://www.ncea.org/events/NCEABostonCentral.asp

NSBA - National School Boards Association
April 21 - 23, 2012
Annual Conference
Boston Convention & Exhibition Center
415 Summer Street
Boston, MA, 02210

2011 VHS College Scholarship Awards

Congratulations to the winners of the 2011 VHS College Scholarship Awards! All the students did a great job showcasing their achievements and explaining how their VHS courses helped them decide on college majors and take advanced courses not offered at their local high schools.

Kelsey G. Spring-Ford Senior High School, PA
Dacie M. Old Town High School, ME
Griffin B. Valley Regional High School, CT
Sarah H. Northland Christian School, TX

To view the student submissions, visit: www.govhs.org/vhsweb/gallery.nsf/VHSScholarship. All of us at VHS wish these students success in college and in their future careers!