

# Richmond Community Schools



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K-12 education



Richmond, Indiana



6,000 students  
400 teachers

## Richmond Community Schools uses Mediasite for just-in-time professional development, training teachers and staff to improve student achievement.

Richmond Community Schools serves Richmond, Indiana – a district comprised of one high school, two middle schools, ten elementary schools and five specialty programs, including a residential treatment facility, adult and alternative education program, family literacy center and vocational/career center. The district has provided students with a quality education for 140 years.

### Challenge

In 2002, Staff Development Coordinator Valerie Biggs started conducting both online and in-person training for principals and teachers on how to use technology to improve student achievement.

When Biggs first started, her schedule was nearly impossible. “The community had recently supported a ten million dollar bond to infuse the school with technology, so there was much to learn and not enough staff or time to go around,” said Biggs. Rob Gibbs, Network Administrator, and Rodger Smith, Director of School Operations, shared her frustration. “The tech guys in our district are very aggressive in their effort to stay in front of the curve. They are always researching new technologies and how they might be used to help the district improve student achievement,” said Smith. During one of those research sessions, Gibbs stumbled upon an online learning site that used rich media for staff training. “Rob introduced the site to Valerie, who saw online learning as the solution to her scheduling problem, and they brought the idea to me,” reported Smith.

Gibbs and Biggs spearheaded the search for an online learning tool, comparing several solutions before selecting Mediasite for its ease-of-use in capturing content and its superior user interface. “We wanted an easy technology solution that everyone could use – something that didn’t require technical expertise to set up and maintain,” said Biggs. “The tech guys put Mediasite through its paces, and I had my staff really give it a good workout so we could see everything it could do,” said Smith. “Then I encouraged them to go out and find similar products to compare it with. When all was said and done, Mediasite was the best solution we evaluated.”

### Solution

The department installed Mediasite within a hardwired lab and a few weeks later, the district’s Webcast Academy™, an online repository of training resources, was born. In 2006 the department added a mobile Mediasite unit that allows presentations to be recorded from any site within the district.

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> Valerie Biggs, Staff Development Coordinator, Richmond Community Schools



Biggs creates the content for most workshops, while some principals and teachers also Mediasite training and briefings. Faculty who watch the presentations live can interact with the instructor via e-mail and participate in polling queries. However, most teachers prefer the convenience of on-demand viewing, either during a free period, after school or from home. Educators simply view the list of thumbnails of a specific session, click on the desired slide, and the audio, video and visual aids are quickly synchronized to that portion of the presentation. "The navigation feature allows our teachers to get what they want and then move on," said Biggs. "Even when they watch the event live, often they'll want to go back and review a specific portion, so it's great for that as well. We call it just-in-time professional development."

When Biggs' team first obtained Mediasite, they began recording a new presentation nearly every week, with topics on technology in the classroom, lesson plans and curriculum guide-lines, student achievement, classroom management and leadership development. At present, Biggs' team records an average of three presentations per month.

"Mediasite has completely revolutionized the way members of the district communicate," she said. "Parents are able to stay current with their children's progress, faculty benefit from ongoing professional development, and students get their teacher in the classroom, even when that instructor must be absent."

### **Result**

Biggs' team wanted to justify time saved as a direct result of their Mediasite purchase. In one project Biggs and others rolled out an online grade book for elementary school teachers.

"In the past, I have led as many as 18 sessions on the same topic," said Biggs. However, this summer she plans to present only one live workshop. Each face-to-face training in ten different buildings would take three hours, so it was an obvious savings to do one online session – saving Biggs over two dozen work hours on every single workshop conducted.

"The success of the WebCast Academy has had a tremendous impact," Biggs said, "And the faculty is starting to envision how Mediasite could be used to fulfill other district communication needs." Biggs and others see Mediasite as a great resource for one K-8 school that requires students to create portfolios of what they have learned over time. The technical staff plans to use Mediasite to record step-by-step instructions for common computer-related tasks, enabling both the IT department and the faculty to work more efficiently, while keeping the technicians focused on larger projects throughout the district.

"We continue to be amazed by the learning applications available with Mediasite," Biggs said. "Already, we have been able to maximize the knowledge and expertise of staff members, resulting in more collaboration within the district. Now we are bringing this economical and convenient technology into the worlds of both students and parents."

### **Benefits**

- Time-savings for the development team over traveling to train on-site
- Increased parent involvement in their children's progress
- Easy access to information through navigation and search
- Convenience of reviewing online resources during a free period or after school