

Comal Independent School District

NEWS RELEASE

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Comal ISD high schools filled for Technology Showcases

When Comal ISD decided to plan not just one but three Technology Showcases this spring, no one knew quite what to expect.

After the impressive attendance figures were added up, don't be surprised if three showcases aren't enough next school year.

More than 1,400 people including students, families, community members, and Comal ISD employees attended the technology showcases.

The attraction were the impressive displays of Comal ISD students using technology as well as the opportunity to win dozens of prizes donated by showcase sponsors.

"It was beyond my expectations," said Sandra Shelton, Comal ISD executive director of technology. "I was so pleased with the number we had turn out. We are planning for next year to be bigger and better. We're already getting requests from people who want to get involved."

Comal ISD students prepared displays and taught sessions during the showcases.



“Our students weren’t just present, they were doing the presentations,” Shelton said. “It was really exciting to see them using the technology they’re learning and showing the skill level they have.”

Shelton said thanks to \$8 million provided through Bond 2008, Comal ISD’s teachers and students have been able to thrive in the new technology world.

“So much credit goes out to our taxpayers that made this possible,” she said. “It’s because of them our students have access to this kind of technology.”

Some of the displays at the Smithson Valley, Canyon and Canyon Lake high school showcases included robotics, video-conferencing with places like NASA, MacBooks in the classroom, Podcasting with Reading Fluency, The Invention of the Camera and Welcome to Seussville.

Breakout sessions included Creating Like Picasso; Internet Safety; Our Solar System; Technology - How Cool Is That!; iPod iLearn; Technology Makes Learning Fun!; Graphic Design for Advertising; and iMovie: Connecting Research and Relevance in Literature.

“To see everything these kids are able to do, even at the elementary and middle school levels, is incredible,” said Comal ISD parent Lisa Rivera. “These are things you’d expect to see in college classrooms.”

Morningside Elementary third-grade student Andrea Perez teamed up with some of her classmates to make a PowerPoint presentation called “Viewing the Human Body Through Technology” in both English and Spanish.

“We got to record everything, and we learned so much during the project,” Perez said. “I was excited about getting to come to the showcase and share this technology.”

Comal ISD school board immediate past-president Bill Swint said he was very proud to see what was on display at the showcases.

“It’s phenomenal to see what our staff and students have done with technology,” Swint said. “It’s wonderful we can have these kinds of showcases to put on display for the parents and public to see just how much this means to our kids. It’s just amazing.”

Church Hill Middle computer applications teacher Bryon Gardner said there's no question his students enjoy all the new technology.

"They love it," said Gardner, who over saw his students displaying a project made with Google SketchUp. "Whenever they had any down time, they were always working on the project on their own."

Sharon Spinks, Comal ISD instructional coordinator for technology, said the district's teachers and students couldn't have done a better job.

"The showcases were a celebration of the advancements of technology in our district," Spinks said. "It showed how we teach and learn now. It was also a great demonstration of how bond dollars are being put to great use."

Thanks to donations from showcase sponsors like Apple, eInstruction, Renaissance Learning, Inc., Studywiz, Polycom, SKC, Data Projections, Combs Consulting Group and Bound to Stay Bound Books Inc., both parents and teachers were able to haul in some very nice donated prizes at the showcases.

Students, parents and community members walked away with prizes like iPads, iPod nanos, Flip video camcorders, digital cameras, high-definition televisions and Nintendo Wii consoles.

Teachers were able to win prizes to use in the classroom like InterWrite tablets and iPod nanos.

"I was thrilled when they called my name," said Canyon Middle teacher Wendy Foster. "We will definitely be able to use the iPod nanos in class for podcasts."

Jennifer Wivagg, Comal ISD instructional media specialist, said the looks on the faces of students, parents and teachers at the showcases were priceless.

"It's very exciting to see students showing parents technology they may not have seen before," Wivagg said. "They were the experts, and that's a direct result of the way our teachers have embraced the new technology."

IN PHOTOS:

CLHS Tech Showcase:

Startzville Elementary student Nelson Madera shows Sherrie Bouchie what he's learned on an iPad during the Technology Showcase at Canyon Lake High on May 12.

CHS Tech Showcase:

Kali Wing, a sixth-grade student in Bryon Gardner's class at Church Hill Middle, shows her sister Kenzi the project she and her classmates created using Google SketchUp at the Canyon High Technology Showcase on May 11.

CHS Showcase Winner:

Church Hill Middle student Tyler Zeiger is all smiles after winning an iPad at the Canyon High Technology Showcase.

SVHS Tech Showcase:

Madelyn Mulder (left) and Samantha Jabour, students in Eric Clark's class at Arlon Seay Elementary, used Vernier pH probes to test various household solutions during the Smithson Valley High Technology Showcase. Clark said Mac software programs help bring his science class alive.

