



E-BRIDGE to EVERYWHERE
CISD introduces Gaggle.net for Students
By Nancy Longino

Have you ever wondered what world today's generation is living in? One that we don't understand is apparently the answer to that. You walk past their bedroom and they are watching television on their flat screens, talking on their cell phones, blogging on their My Space or Facebook accounts, listening to music on their iPods, Instant Messaging their friends (also known as IM'ing) – all the while doing their homework. All of these are forms of communication in one way or another, and being used by 61% of all teenagers on a consistent basis. They are well versed in electronics, and easily adopt and absorb the very latest in technologies. As adults sometimes we don't (or can't) understand their use of technology, and feel alienated from their world of cyberspace.

CISD is reaching across that barrier to gain back access to their attention spans. Introducing Gaggle.net to teachers and students in technology classes will allow teachers to integrate online projects with students in a safe technology environment. Students will have access to student email accounts, blogs, message boards, chat rooms, and digital lockers (a form of safe online storage for their work) – all safely monitored by the classroom teacher. For example, if the 8th grade English teacher wants to do a project on Mars with the 8th grade Science teacher; those students in both classes can get online and discuss the project, insert fresh imaginative ideas, be outwardly creative and speak freely. With students being in the comfort of their cyberspace world, it allows the student to be at ease from peer pressure or embarrassment, therefore fostering creativity, increasing motivation, and increasing student collaboration. The teachers can set up blog times where they are actually available at night to blog (talk to online) with the students in their class regarding the project they had assigned. This extends the classroom to the home, providing more one-on-one access and individual attention.

CISD has one objective in mind. To provide a safe web based email solution for students and staff. Disconnecting the students from the cell phone and reconnecting them to education.
