

Capital Region/ FEH BOCES / Questar III

DISTANCE LEARNING PROJECT

REFERENCE MANUAL

2007-2008 School Year

8/14/07

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1. INTRODUCTION

Project Goal - The principal goal of the Distance Learning Project is to expand educational and vocational training opportunities in the CRB, FEH, and Questar III regions.

Project Description - The distance learning network is a two-way, fully interactive, full-motion video and audio system connecting specially designed classrooms in participating school districts. The network uses fiber-optic cable and telecommunications technology to enable a teacher and students in a distance learning classroom in one school to see, hear, and talk to students in comparably equipped classrooms in other schools on the network. The simultaneously interactive environment means that the teacher and all students remain in visual and verbal communication at all times during a class.

Project Participants and Schedule of Classes – Sixteen (17) sites are currently participating in the project. They are:

Albany-CTE	Moriah
Berne-Knox-Westerlo	Schalmont
Cobleskill-Richmondville	Schoharie
Cohoes	Schoharie-CTE
Duanesburg	Scotia-Glenville
Malone (Franklin Academy)	Sharon Springs
Maple Hill	St. Regis Falls
Middleburgh	Tupper Lake
Mohonasen	

Twenty-two (25) additional sites on the Saratoga-Adirondack Network and Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery BOCES Network are also connected to the system. The distance learning course schedule of classes is included in the appendix.

The Distance Learning Classroom - The classroom in which the teacher is located is the host site. The classrooms to which a host site transmits are called the remote or receive sites.

Each distance learning classroom is equipped with two-way, fully interactive audio/video equipment. The equipment consists of:

- a. An overhead-mounted document camera to display visual material and serve as an "electronic chalkboard."
- b. A camera focused on the teacher. In many rooms, this camera is in the back of the room and is also equipped with a tracking system which can follow the teacher as he/she moves around the classroom.
- c. A camera in the front of the room, focused on the students.

- d. Microphones located throughout the room. In many rooms microphones are surface-mounted at each student table and the teacher station.
- e. A sufficient amount of diffused light to transmit video properly.
- f. Monitors or projection system in the front of the room for student viewing (and, in some rooms, teacher viewing) of each remote site and any material displayed by means of the document camera, play VCR, DVD player or computer.
- g. Monitors in the back of the room (in most rooms) for teacher viewing of the students in each remote site. These monitors are built into the student desks at some sites.
- h. Two VCRs: one to play a prerecorded tape and one to record a lesson or record activity in any of the sites. Some sites also are equipped with a DVD player.
- i. Teacher station touch screen controls to select the camera to be active and to adjust the cameras (pan, tilt, zoom).
- j. A phone/fax/copy machine to transmit hardcopy between sites (quizzes, homework, instructions, etc.) and to contact students individually through a phone call.
- k. A computer at the teacher station (in some classrooms).
- l. Computers at the student desks (in some classrooms).

Diagrams of the two common distance learning classroom models, showing equipment and layout, are provided in the appendix of this manual.

2. OPERATING GUIDELINES

The Distance Learning Project is a new and exciting venture including several school districts in Albany, Rensselaer, Schenectady, and Schoharie Counties. As teachers and administrators, we understand that this is a new project, and that there will be changes and adjustments that may have to be made as the project develops and expands.

As a starting point, we agree to try, in good faith, to work together within the parameters of the following general guidelines: A-J.

- a. The teaching of classes on the Distance Learning System shall be voluntary with commitment for a full school year determined on or before June 1 of the previous school year.

- b. An Advisory Committee has been established to act in the capacity of a liaison between the schools, and to deal with problems that may arise. The Advisory Committee is made up of representatives of each school.
- c. The intent of the Distance Learning Project is to improve/expand learning opportunities. Therefore, there will be no reduction of staff in the department of the school where a course is being sent or received, directly related to the Distance Learning System.
- d. Every effort will be made to accommodate visitors.
- e. The optimum class size for distance learning is in the range of 18 to 20 students. A larger class size is allowable with teacher permission, but shall not exceed 24 students total. Teachers must be appropriately consulted about adding any students after the course begins.
- f. Teacher training will be provided before and as needed, during the semester or school year. Such training will be considered for in-service credit in accordance with provisions of the local school.
- g. Distance learning classes will not be subject to teacher evaluations unless agreed upon by the teacher.
- h. Supervision will be provided at each Distance Learning site.
- i. Technical support will be made available for each Distance Learning site.
- j. Any agreement in regard to the above area will be effective during the period of July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008.

Any understanding dealing strictly with the Distance Learning Project does not change or replace any agreement or practice currently enforced in the local districts.

3. TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of teachers participating in the distance learning program are essentially the same as those of any teacher in the respective school districts.

Distance learning instruction does entail, however, several unique responsibilities. Teachers in the distance learning program will:

- a. Develop course descriptions to be shared with students at the beginning of the school year or semester.
- b. Use prescribed equipment.

- c. Send grades to remote sites.
- d. Develop three (3) emergency lesson plans to be used by substitutes.

Overall discipline will be the responsibility of the host-site teacher. Persistent or serious problems will be the responsibility of host-site administrators or their designees.

4. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Any staff member teaching an approved course on the distance learning system is required to complete a formal training workshop.

During training, the teacher will learn how to operate the distance learning system and its component parts (e.g. cameras, monitors, VCR, fax machine) and prepare and deliver a short lesson using equipment to transmit to at least one other site.

- a. Teacher training will be conducted during the summer months or at convenient times during the school year. The training may qualify for in-service credit.
- b. Additional staff, such as substitute teachers, teacher aides, room monitors, and media specialists, may be trained at the discretion of the participating school districts.
- c. Teachers will be compensated for participation in the training sessions.

5. STUDENT POLICY

5.1 Course Registration

- a. Guidance counselors in the respective school districts schedule students for courses on the distance learning network.
- b. Guidance counselors generate a list of student enrollment and submit the list to the host schools' guidance counselors.

5.2 Student Orientation

All students scheduled for distance learning courses:

- a. Are provided with an opportunity to visit the distance learning classroom before the course begins.
- b. Receive a copy of the distance learning student manual.

- c. Must sign, along with their parents, the student agreement form before starting a distance learning class.

5.3 Student Evaluation

- a. Distance learning students are evaluated in accordance with the approved course description. The host-site teacher will inform students of the evaluation methods and processes at the beginning of each course.
- b. The final examination schedule is coordinated through and disseminated by the building principals.

5.4 Student Grading

- a. All grades are the responsibility of the host-site teacher. The teacher keeps grades in numerical form. The teacher ensures that grade reports are transmitted to the remote-site schools by courier or by fax on the dates stated in the official distance learning school calendar.
- b. Host site teachers submit interim (5-week) reports to the remote sites on the dates stated in the official distance learning calendar, using the official form of the sending school.

5.5 Student Record Keeping

- a. Student records for distance learning courses are kept by the host-site teachers. This includes grades, attendance, and any other information deemed necessary.
- b. Supervising staff members at the remote sites take daily attendance in the distance learning classrooms and report all absences to the appropriate authority, in accordance with school attendance procedures.
- c. The host site teacher sends all cumulative records to the distance learning students' respective schools at the conclusion of the course.

5.6 Student Discipline

- a. The teacher conducting a distance learning class is expected to maintain an appropriate learning environment.
- b. Inappropriate student behavior at the remote sites is handled by the site administrator (or designee). The supervising staff member at the remote site is responsible for communicating any discipline problem to the appropriate administrator.

5.7 Student Discipline Policy

The success of the distance learning program requires the cooperation and support of students. The following expectations must be understood and agreed upon by students and parents alike.

Students are expected to:

- a. Follow all school rules, including those specifically developed for the distance learning program.
- b. Handle distance learning classroom equipment only if authorized to do so.
- c. Sit within camera view at all times, unless instructed by the teacher to do otherwise.

In cases where rules are not followed, students are subject to local procedures administered by the teachers, site administrator(s), and/or others as designated.

6. COURSE SCHEDULE

The distance learning course schedule for the 2006-2007 school year appears in the appendix.

7. CALENDAR

The distance learning calendar is designed as follows:

- a. The calendar of the host district is used for each course being offered.
- b. The schedule includes the dates for end of marking periods and the due dates for interim reports and grades.

8. CLASS CANCELLATIONS AND INTERRUPTIONS

- a. Classes are canceled only for factors at the host sites, such as equipment failure or snow days, or for scheduled events (early dismissals for conferences, for example) appearing on the distance learning calendar.
- b. Cancellations at remote sites are treated as days missed and the students are responsible for making up the work.

- c. Scheduled interruptions, such as fire drills or field trips that take students out of distance learning classes, are held to a minimum. Whenever possible, remote sites are notified in advance of such events.

9. TEXTBOOKS AND MATERIALS

Textbooks and materials for a distance learning course are selected by the host teacher, purchased by the host school, and distributed to remote sites.

10. SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

- a. A teacher absent from his/her distance learning class follows the established procedures related to substitute coverage. In addition, the teacher is responsible for informing the appropriate person that he or she is a host teacher of a distance learning class.
- b. Each distance learning teacher is responsible for developing emergency plans for substitute teachers, including such things as videos, work sheets, etc.
- c. Host schools will attempt to supply substitute teachers trained in distance learning procedures when a host teacher is absent.

11. FIELD TRIPS

Field trips for distance learning classes are arranged by agreement of the host and remote sites, through the respective building principals.

12. COURIER SYSTEM

A key component of the distance learning program is the reliable and efficient distribution of materials between network sites. Below are the various options program participants can use to move materials from one site to another:

- a. Each distance learning classroom has a fax/copy machine to transport tests, quizzes, and other paperwork between sites.
- b. Teachers and students are encouraged to use the document camera (Elmo) to transport information between sites (for example, a student at a remote site could place his/her homework on the document camera for the host-site teacher to see).

- c. For some sites, a daily courier system runs through the Schoharie-CTE campus. It functions as follows:
 - 1) Sites place materials in a suitcase or bag with the district's label
 - 2) Each district appoints 1-2 responsible students who travel daily to Schoharie-CTE with the suitcase.
 - 3) Materials are sorted at the center and placed in the corresponding school's suitcase or bag.
 - 4) The student courier then picks up the sorted suitcase at the end of his/her program day and returns to the local district with the suitcase for local distribution.
- d. Teachers and teacher aides can also use the BOCES courier, which visits each school three (3) times a week, to deliver materials. All materials using the BOCES courier should use the "Distance Learning Courier Mail" cover page, indicating the individual the mail is being sent to.
- e. Regular mail service can also be used.
- f. Sites may want to establish another mechanism for distributing materials on an individual basis.

13. VISITATIONS

To maintain an optimum educational atmosphere in the distance learning environment, the following policy must be adhered to:

- a. Each visit must receive prior approval of the distance learning instructor(s) affected by the visit, whether at the teacher's own host site or at a remote site.
- b. Each building visitor must report to the designated administrator's office upon arrival to the building and prior to the distance learning visitation.

14. COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Steering Committee

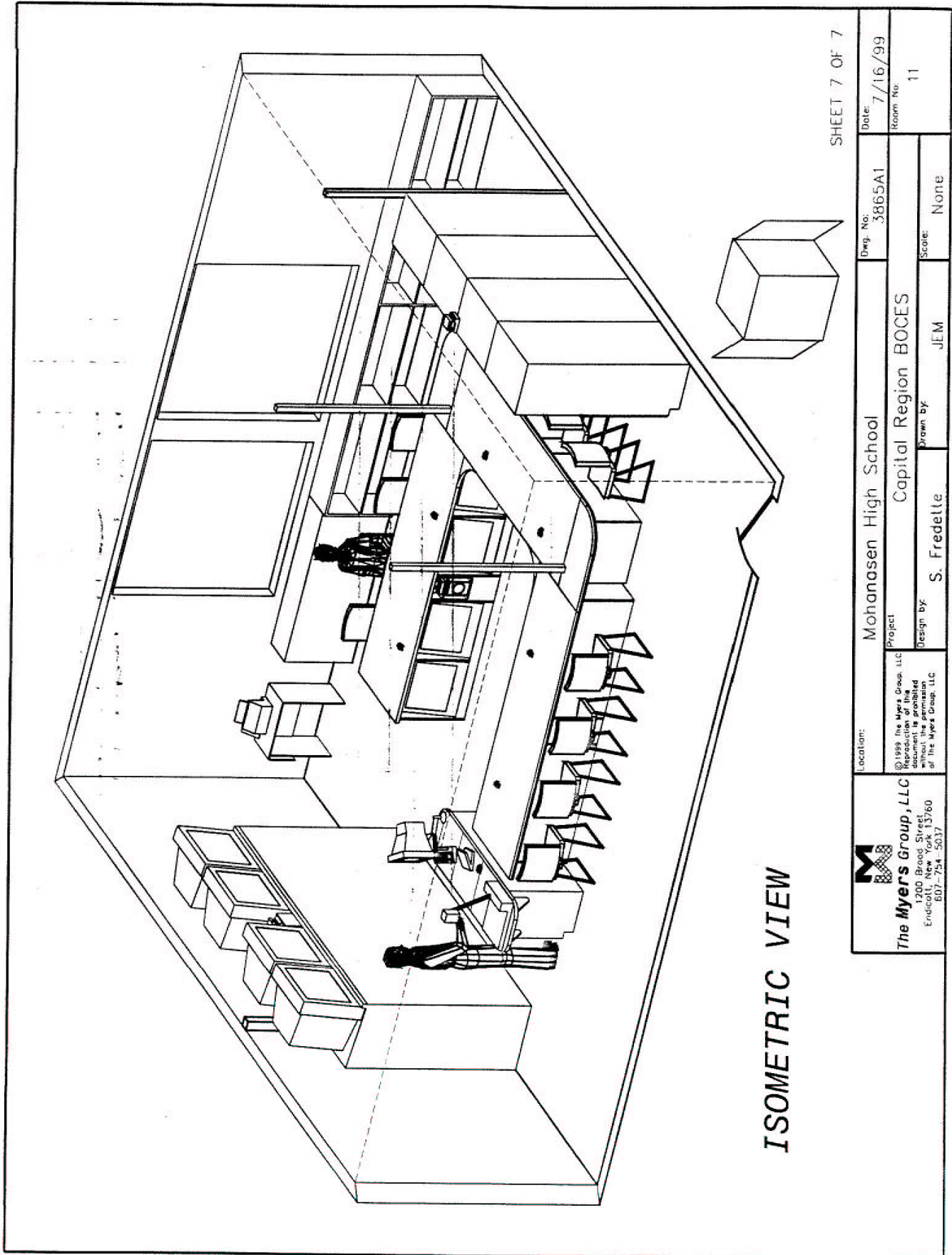
- Has ultimate decision making authority and responsibility for distance learning project
- Membership consists of:
 - Superintendents from each distance learning district
 - College representatives
 - Teachers Union representative
 - Representatives from each of the subcommittees
 - BOCES representatives

Advisory Committee

- The project's working group
- Main responsibility is developing distance learning program (school year schedule, summer school, college courses, etc.)
- Makes recommendations to Steering Committee about distance learning policy
- Membership consists of:
 - Representation from each school (Superintendents, Principals, Guidance Counselors, Teachers)
 - College representatives
- Recommendations and decisions made through consensus - if committee reaches impasse on an issue, Steering Committee makes ultimate ruling
- Districts can send more than one person to this committee's meetings, however, if ever a vote is necessary, each school gets one vote


Teachers Committee

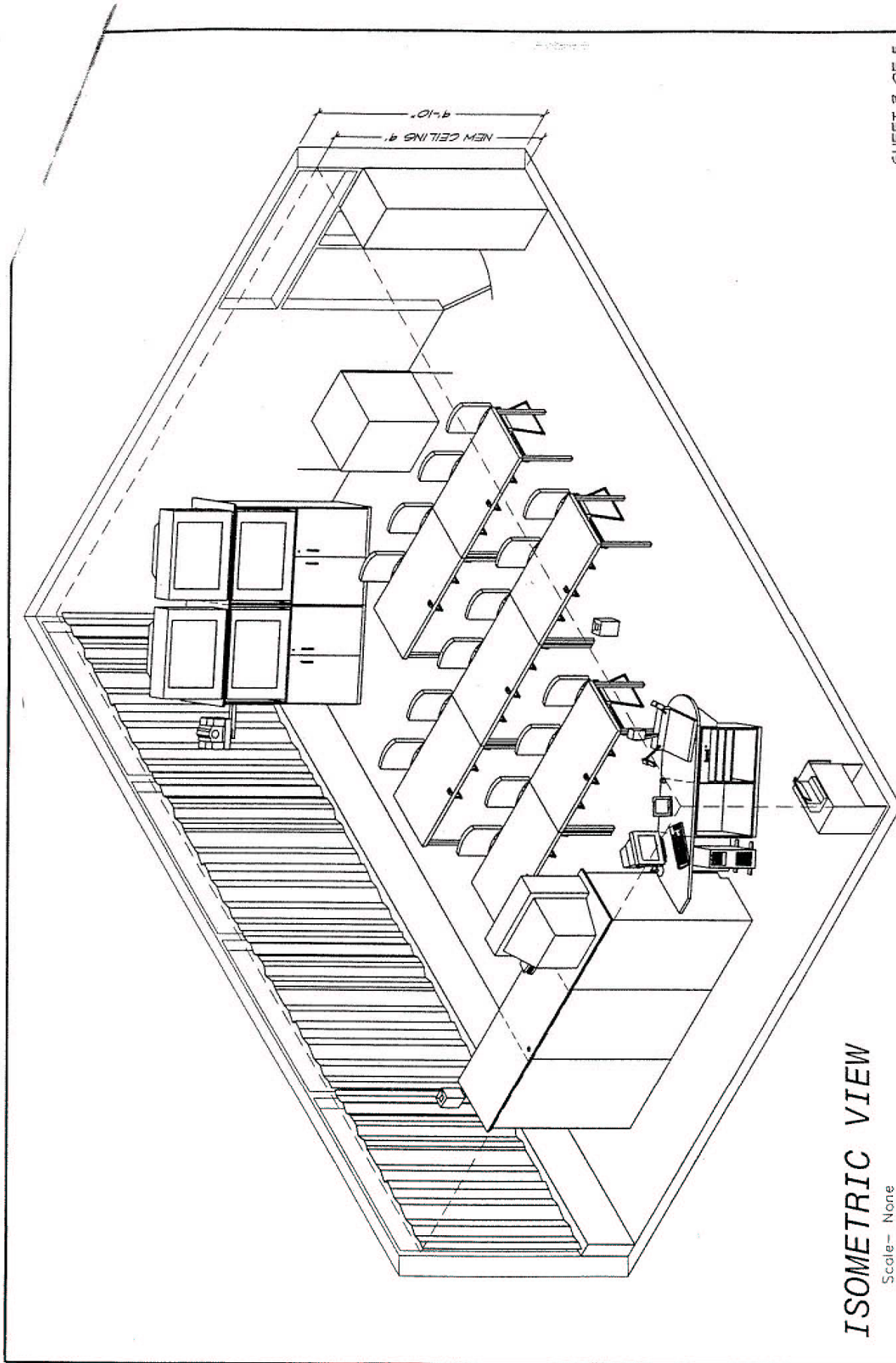
- Responsible for discussing distance learning teacher issues
- Membership consists of:
 - Instructors teaching on the system
 - Union representation
- Makes recommendations to Steering Committee about distance learning policy



SHEET 7 OF 7

ISOMETRIC VIEW

 The Myers Group, LLC 1200 Broad St. #1500 Endicott, New York 13760 607-754-5037	Location: Mohanasen High School	Dwg. No.: 3865A1	Date: 7/16/99
	Project: Capital Region BOCES	Design by: S. Fredette	Drawn by: JEM
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ISOMETRIC VIEW

Scale - None

SHEET 3 OF 5

The Myers Group, LLC Technology Design Consultants 133 Front Street Vestal, NY 13850 (607-754-5037)	Project: Schalmont (Capital Region BOCES)	TAG REF: 5110B1	Date: 09/18/01
	Description: DLC - Room 161 <small>© 2001, The Myers Group, LLC. Reproduction of this document is prohibited without the permission of The Myers Group, LLC.</small> Design by: D. Myers Drawn by: JEM		Drawing No: 5110B1

**Capital Region BOCES / FEH BOCES / Questar III
Draft Distance Learning Course Schedule, Fall 2007**

Period	Albany CTE	Beaumont-Westview	Cobleskill-Richmondville	Coboes	Duanesburg	Malone	Maple Hill	Middleburgh	Mohamans	Morristh	St. Regis Falls	Schalmoor	Schoharie CTE	Schoharie	Scotchtown	Saratoga Springs	Tupper Lake	Regional System
Early 7:36-8:18																		
1 8:21-9:01		Bio-Ethics (Receive - 8:08-8:48) AP Psych.	Bio-Ethics (Receive - 8:08-8:48) AP Psych.	AP Economics (7:17-7:56)	AP Amer. History (Receive)	Bio-Ethics (Host - 8:08-8:48) AP Psych.	Mandarin Chinese (7:45-8:30) AP Psych. (Receive -)	AP World Hist. (Rec. 8:08-8:49)	AP Psych. (Receive -)			AP Amer. Hist. (Host - 8:00-8:40)	Mandarin Chinese (Receive)			AP Econ. (Receive - 7:17-7:55)	Mandarin Chinese (Receive)	
2 9:05-9:45		(Host - 8:52-9:33) Civil War	(Receive - 8:08-8:48) AP Psych.	AP Psych. (Host - 8:55-9:35)	AP Psych. (Receive - Coboes)	(Receive - BKW)	Scots Civil War	AP Psych. (Host)	Scots	Spanish 4 (Host)	Spanish 4 (Receive)	AP Psych. (Receive - M'burgh)			AP Psych. (Host -)	AP Psych. (Receive - M'burgh)	Spanish 4 (Receive)	
3 9:48-10:29			(H - 9:21-10:17am)	Civil War	Psychology (Receive)	Sign Lang.	(Receive - Cobleskill) Sign Lang.		Psychology (Receive)	Vet. Science (Receive)		Psychology (Host)			(Receive - Cobleskill) Sign Lang.		Vet. Science (Receive)	
4 10:35-11:15		(Receive - Coboes)	(H - 10:20-11:00am)	Civil War (H - 10:20-11:03am)	Civil War (Receive - Mohon)	(H - 10:20-11:00am)	(R - 10:20-11:00am)		Civil War (Host)	French IV (Receive)	American	French IV (Host)			(R - 10:20-11:00am)	Civil War (Receive - Mohon)	French IV (Receive)	ASLI
5 11:17-11:57		U.S. Hist. Music & Movies (R)	Poetry (Receive)	AP Studio Art (11:29 - 12:12)	AP Studio Art (11:29 - 12:12pm)	SAT Prep (Receive)	U.S. Hist. Music & Movies (R)	Poetry (Host)	AP Java Program. (Receive)	SAT Prep (H - 11:30-12pm)	Sign Lang. I (11:00-11:42)	AP Java Program. (Host)			U.S. Hist. Music & Movies (H)	SAT Prep (Receive)		(Host) AP Java (Receive)
6 11:58-12:38			Psychology (Receive)		Sign Language (Receive)	AP Euro. History (Receive)	World War I (Receive)	Psychology (Receive)	World War I (Receive)	World War I (12:02-12:38pm)	AP Euro. History (Host)	Psychology (Host)				World War I (Receive)		
7 12:39-1:20		Music Theory (Receive)	Women Writers (Receive)		Sign Language (Receive)		French IV (Host)	Women Writers (Host)		Music Theory (Receive)	Music Th. (12:41pm-1:20pm)	Sign Language (Receive)			Women Writers (Receive)		Sign Language (Host)	
8 1:24-2:04		Environment Science	Theater Arts (Receive - Schalmoor)	Environ. Science	AP World History (Host)		Mandarin Chinese (Host)	Theater Arts (Host)	AP World History (Receive)	Music In Our Lives (1:29-2:09)	Music In Our Lives (1:29-2:09)	Theater Arts (Host)			Environ. Science	Mandarin Chinese (Receive)	Theater Arts (M'burgh)	Mandarin Chinese (R - Vestal)
9 2:06-2:46		(Receive)		Host - 1:43	Intro to Poly-Sci / Gov't (R)		Intro to Poly-Sci / Gov't (R)	Environ. Science (Receive)		Poly-Sci / Gov't (R - 2:18-3:00)					(Receive)	Environ. Science (Host)	Environ. Science (Receive)	

**TWO-WAY
INTERACTIVE TELEVISION CLASSES
STUDENT AGREEMENT FORM**

Two-way interactive television provides a method for districts to provide low incidence courses and advanced programming that normally might not be offered to students in this school. Because of the uniqueness of two-way interactive television, certain standards of performance and behavior must be maintained by students enrolling in these courses. This policy statement is intended to make both the student and parents aware of the standards expected of students enrolling in such courses.

As a student taking a two-way interactive course, I am aware that:

1. Standards are expected of me, as a student, and insubordination of any kind will not be tolerated. Insubordination has been defined as anything that interferes with teaching or learning in the classroom.
2. Inappropriate language or gestures will not be tolerated.
3. Because of the technology, anything I do in the classroom can be taped.
4. Certain classroom procedures must be followed:
 - a. Students must sit within camera view at all times
 - b. Students must not mishandle the equipment in the classroom
 - c. Students must follow all other rules as specified by the teacher.
5. I will only attend conflicting local school assemblies when I am directly involved in presenting the assembly program.

The following procedures will be followed for students who cannot follow the above listed rules:

First Offense:	The student will be given a verbal warning and told that his/her parents will be notified by letter of the infraction. The classroom teacher will send the letter to the parents. A copy of the letter will also be sent to the student's principal
Second Offense:	The student will be removed from the class. Parent conference is required before the student may re-enter class.
SEVERE MISCONDUCT:	The student will be removed from the class, possibly on a permanent basis.

We, the undersigned, have read and understand the policy above, and agree to everything stated.

_____	_____
Student	Date
_____	_____
Parent	Date
_____	_____
Principal	Date