

## Great Things Grow in Greene County

**A**s the first step in a project to bridge the “digital divide,” Greene County, with a rural population of less than 20,000, has placed low-cost laptop computers with all 1,700 of its middle and high school students.

Greene County Superintendent Steve Mazingo originated the idea. He first worked with Apple Computers on the concept, then approached County Manager Lee Worsley about financial support. The Greene County Board of Commissioners and Board of Education unanimously supported the iTech project.

The county funded the project for four years (2003–07), with a special 0.0 percent financing rate arranged by

Apple Computers. The result of the collaborative effort is that each student in middle or high school has a laptop that he or she can use in the classroom and take home for use by other family members.

School administrators have been to Charlotte, Greensboro, Greenville, and Pinehurst, as well as to four other states, to tell the iTech story.

Mazingo, Director of Instruction Pat MacNeill, and School Board Chairwoman Pat Adams presented the iTech program to the State Board of Education this fall. Board members from some of the state’s largest school systems hailed their efforts. Lieutenant Governor Beverly Purdue called the county a “poster child for technology.”

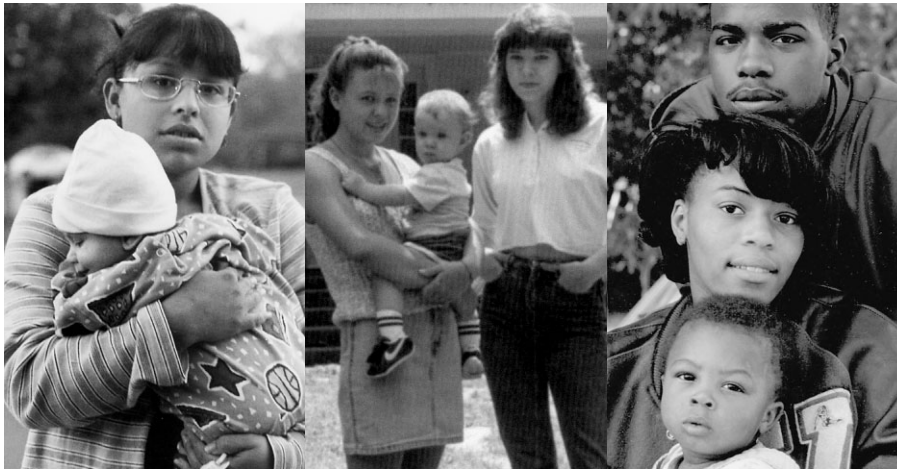
“To be innovative to the point where we’re ahead of all school districts, small and large, is distinctive for Greene County,” Mazingo said. He describes the program as the most significant change that he has seen in teaching in his thirty-year career.

Having laptops in the hands of the students is not the ultimate goal of iTech. More broadly, the project aims to advance the lifelong-learning capacities of Greene County citizens. iTech is helping students become more competitive as they graduate and enter the workforce or pursue higher education. The project also creates a foundation for training the adult workforce in new areas.

Further, iTech is an economic development and recruitment tool because it lays the groundwork for a technology-savvy community. For example, the county government plans to expand wireless Internet access across the county in the next year.

For more information, contact Mazingo at (252) 747-3425, Worsley at (252) 747-3446, or Gail Edmondson, iTech project manager, at (252) 747-8113.





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## School Publishes New Legal Guide on Pregnant Students

**A**lthough the teen pregnancy rate has dropped sharply, almost 7,000 girls aged seventeen or younger still become pregnant each year in North Carolina, and almost 5,000 give birth. Nearly all of the 5,000 become the sole custodial parent of their child. Continuing education is crucial for their future and that of their children.

According to the Alan Guttmacher Institute, “[D]ropping out of school, not having a baby, is the key factor that sets adolescent mothers behind their peers. If a pregnant teenager does drop out, it is unlikely that she will return to school before her children are in school. Adolescent mothers who stay in school are almost as likely eventually to graduate (73%) as women who do not become mothers while in high school (77%). In contrast, only about 30% of women who drop out of high school either before or after their baby’s birth eventually graduate.”

To help adolescent mothers, their parents, and school officials, the School of Government published *Public Schools and Pregnant and Parenting Adolescents* in May 2004. The third in a series, this guide addresses schools’ legal responsibilities to provide services to keep pregnant girls and young mothers on track.

Above all, the law requires that pregnant and parenting adolescents be allowed to enroll and participate in school programs and activities. Teen mothers must be treated like other students, including getting college counseling, vocational education, and job training opportunities. Under North Carolina’s children-with-special-needs law, these young mothers are entitled to homebound instruction when they are medically unable to attend school. Federal law guarantees the right to excused absences for the medical necessities of pregnancy. The guide describes current law and what changes in law and enforcement could most benefit this vulnerable population and their children.

To read or print this guide or the others, go to [www.adolescentpregnancy.unc.edu](http://www.adolescentpregnancy.unc.edu).

## Consortium Receives Grant to Study Best Practices in Civic Education

**N**orth Carolina is one of only six states chosen by the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools to receive a \$150,000 grant to promote civic learning. Thirty-six states submitted proposals.

The campaign is a national initiative to help prepare America’s young people to be informed and active citizens.

The grant will support the North Carolina Civic Education Consortium’s work with several state and national partners to conduct two pilot studies of best practices in civic education. Partners include the State Department of Public Instruction and the National Center for Learning and Citizenship.

One pilot, in Duplin County Schools, will identify and evaluate new forms of civic education assessment and accountability. The other pilot, in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, will develop model current-events resources for teachers and then make them available statewide.

“The North Carolina Civic Education Consortium is excited about the opportunity provided by this grant,” said Debra J. Henzey, consortium director. “It will assist us in filling gaps in our knowledge of best practices that promote lifelong civic engagement, and in giving policymakers better



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information on decisions that support these practices.”

The grant begins in November 2004 and lasts two years. The Carnegie Corporation of New York and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation fund the campaign. The Council for Excellence in Government, in partnership with the Academy for Educational Development, manages it.

The North Carolina Civic Education Consortium is a nonpartisan partnership hosted by the School of Government at UNC at Chapel Hill. More information about the consortium is available at [www.civics.org](http://www.civics.org). More information about the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools is available at [www.civicmissionofschools.org/](http://www.civicmissionofschools.org/).