

## **LEAVITT CALLS FOR HIGH-TECH SCHOOL SYSTEM**

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Gov. Mike Leavitt outlined sweeping changes for Utah's educational system Wednesday, calling on public schools and colleges to reinvent the way learning is delivered.

Leavitt challenged schools to forsake a bricks-and-mortar mentality and instead offer education through high-tech means to every student, using such things as educational TV, computers, videos and interactive electronic classrooms. He envisioned an "electronic high school" to augment regular high school offerings, entire college majors available on computer disks and interactive classrooms with a professor at one site leading discussions with students in far-flung locations - with all of them able to see and talk to each other through high-tech means.

Even more futuristic will be the uses of virtual reality and holography, he said.

"Imagine a renowned professor delivering a lecture in your living room by holographic image," Leavitt said. "This is not a dream. It will soon be reality."

Leavitt spoke to the Utah State Board of Regents, the Legislature and the Utah State Board of Education, gathered in Cedar City for a summit.

State Superintendent for Public Instruction Scott W. Beam and Commissioner of Higher Education Cecelia H. Foxley praised Leavitt's speech and said his challenges could be met over time.

Conspicuously missing from Leavitt's speech was any mention of how much his technology dream might cost and where the funding might come from.

The governor later said that he is aware that the costs of evolving technologies could be great, but he said he believes that Utah can do it and that it can be done without raising taxes.

The governor acknowledged that the "Centennial" theme that has run through his education reform plans may have to be revised since it is unlikely that the sweeping changes he proposes could be in place by Utah's 100th birthday in 1996.

"But we have to start moving in a particular direction," he said.

In his speech, Leavitt said he will announce at the next legislative session a technology initiative that will shift some money from buildings to technology.

"We must make a major shift, a historic shift, in our basic strategy," Leavitt said. "We don't have the capacity to build the infrastructure of the future and still expand the infrastructure of the past at the same pace."

Leavitt's program was boosted by an announcement from Alan Ashton, president and CEO of WordPerfect Corp., who revealed a new agreement with the state that will offer software to schools at huge discounts.

WordPerfect will sell computer software programs that now cost \$250 to schools for \$18.50. The company also will offer instruction kits to assist teachers.

Leavitt issued three major challenges to educators in his talk:

- Use high-tech to revise education so it is not bound by buildings, place or space.
- Make technology-delivered learning part of every student's education. By the end of 1996, the secondary core curriculum for high schools and college courses for general associate degrees should be available through technology.

- Pick up the pace in education to let students move through high school or college as quickly as the individual is able. A Centennial Scholarship and Apprenticeship Program should be

established, offering a \$1,000 scholarship or apprenticeship to high school students who graduate early. The money will come from existing funds. Eliminate roadblocks in college so some students can earn bachelor's degrees in three years instead of five.

Leavitt said critics will denounce high-tech learning as a passing fad, but he said it is essential to prepare students for the future.

“Not preparing students for the technology-driven world is like not teaching them to read,” he said.

This new approach will make better use of school buildings and teacher talents, he said.

Leavitt said limiting access to higher education is not the answer. He said the state must provide some form of post-secondary training to every prepared student.

“Technology will never replace great teachers,” he said. “But it will be a powerful tool in teachers' hands, helping them facilitate and coach, not just lecture.”