



# The Paintsville Herald

**JCBOE receives 156 iMac workstations from Dataseam**

**By Waylon Wilson, Staff Writer**

**June 26, 2019**



**Dataseam CEO Brian Gupton, Mike Whitaker, Thom Cochran, Jeff Cochran and Lisa Salyer stand in front of more than 100 iMac workstations received by the district Monday as part of their involvement in the Dataseam grid. Submitted photo**

The Johnson County Schools Board of Education received 156 new iMac workstations Monday for students and staff within the district as a result of its ongoing partnership with Dataseam, a company that uses the computers as a means for cancer treatment research in Kentucky.

“(Dataseam CEO Brian Gupton’s) partnership with Johnson County Schools has been absolutely vital over the last several years, and just today we received another blessing from that partnership,” Superintendent Thom Cochran said during the board’s meeting Monday. “Brian, alongside the work of Lisa Salyer, Mike Whitaker and Jeff Cochran, partnered up, took training and passed assessments and, today, we received 156 iMac computers ... I cannot brag enough on (Gupton) and on Dataseam, without their partnership, a lot of the things we have for the students of Johnson County would not be possible.”



The board heard an update on the district's contributions to Dataseam as well as information about the company, which works with the University of Louisville's James Graham Brown Cancer Center. The company and cancer center use the Mac computers, placed in school districts around the state of Kentucky as a grid that helps researchers develop new cancer treatments, according to Gupton, who spoke at the meeting.

"Thank you for having me, it's good to be here and it's been a couple years since I filled in a board here in Johnson County, so it's time to do so," Gupton said. "I can't brag enough on the district and their participation in the program. Our relationship with the district goes back to 2005."

Gupton then detailed the history of Dataseam, which he said originally started as an economic development program using Kentucky coal severance funds to build a cancer research infrastructure for the University of Louisville throughout the coalfields of the state.

"This economic development program was focused on creating an (infrastructure) to grow and develop new and more effective cancer drugs. We did this in a very unique way," Gupton said. "Instead of building a super computer that was housed at the cancer center, we decided we would kill two birds with one stone. So, the tip of the spear is the research infrastructure for the cancer center, but the byproducts of that are new workstations for our participating districts originally in our eastern and western Kentucky coalfields."

According to Gupton, these workstations help to cut costs for the research and run behind the scenes on the computers, which are linked in a grid throughout the state, joining their computing power for the purpose of research.

"So, while teachers and students are getting these workstations, they all sit, linked together, statewide, and they are developing new cancer drugs for the University of Louisville at a fraction of the time and cost of doing it in a traditional laboratory setting," Gupton said. "That cancer research is running 24 hours a day, seven days a week and 365 days a year, so long as those teachers and students are leaving those computers on."

Gupton said this grid lends itself greatly to the research efforts, helping cover 90 percent of the work done there.

"We do approximately 2,000 years worth of cancer research with what we've got on the grid right now, it's 90 percent of how the cancer center does their work, and there's not a person in this room that hasn't been impacted by cancer, we've probably got survivors sitting in this room right now, family and friends that have been impacted," Gupton said. "Eastern Kentucky is ground zero for the cancer epidemic in the United States."

Gupton said these computers have already contributed to the identification of four new cancer drugs, two of which have gone on to see clinical trials. One of the drugs, Gupton said, has even seen clinical trials in Kentuckians.

"So, you all are making a difference, along with the other participating schools in how we do this and how we address it in a unique way," Gupton said. "The grid that these computers are a part of is the largest grid of its kind in the world."

As part of the partnership, the Johnson County Schools district has received approximately \$1,139,506 worth of computers from Dataseam due to the training undertaken by Johnson county educators and computer technicians working within the district, according to Gupton. "Over the course of the last 15 years, the district has invested \$171,342 in training and certification as part of that local investment," Gupton said. "Your economic development folks,

at a state level, they like to see skin in the game at a local level, so they know that everybody's vested as a part of that return on investment."

Gupton said the district has invested an additional \$25,800 in training to take place in the fall, meaning that for the cost of less than one computer lab's worth of computers, the district has secured enough computers for more than six labs and contributed to cancer research and training centered on STEM fields for the purpose of future-proofing Kentucky's economic development.

"Johnson County Schools, the one thing that's great, is that, no matter who's leading the district, no matter who we've worked with, it's always been a consistent partner in the program for us," Gupton said. "No matter who's been in the technology department, no matter who's been the superintendent, it's been a great relationship."

Gupton praised the district's initiative to provide access to Johnson County students. "You all have done a tremendous job with technology," Gupton said. "There's a lot of schools that could learn from you all. Whether it's participating with us, the Chromebook initiative and other initiatives you all have taken on on your own to provide access, it's a game changer for these students and those students are going to be better prepared as they head to the next level, should they choose to do so."

The Johnson County Schools Board of Education meets on the fourth Monday of each month at 5 p.m. in the administrative building on the Johnson Central High School and Johnson County Middle School campus, unless otherwise noted. All meetings are open to the public.



## Whitley, Hancock County students chosen for pilot two-year IT apprenticeship program

Posted On 05 Dec 2018 By : Mark White, The News Journal



**Pictured from left to right include: Hancock County CIO Greg Payne, Whitley County CIO Kevin Anderson, students Blake McCullah, Casey Baize, Morgan McKiddy, and Conner Wilson, 82nd Rep. Regina Huff (R-Williamsburg), and Senate President Robert Stivers (R-Manchester).**

Instead of flipping burgers at a fast food restaurant and making minimum wage, Whitley County High School juniors Morgan McKiddy, Blake McCullah and Conner Wilson along with Hancock County High School junior Casey Baize have a different part-time job and will be learning a trade that could benefit them long after high school.

Each will be making \$9.50 per hour thanks in part to a new pilot program being implemented in Whitley and Hancock counties that will teach the students skills in the Information Technology (IT) field.

Through this two-year paid apprenticeship opportunity with Dataseam of Louisville, students will work alongside experienced professionals to maintain, configure, install, repair and troubleshoot computer, network and software at their schools.

The program will also serve as a pipeline to potential careers in the space science, state or local government, banking and financial services.

"The intent is that it is a 2,000 hour program for them to get an apprenticeship certificate, which is a common thing with the skilled trades like electricians, plumbers and those sort of things," Dataseam's CEO Brian Gupton said during a Nov. 28 press conference at the Whitley County Board of Education's central office in Williamsburg. "A lot of it is on the job training and engagement, but also enrichment experiences."

The students have already been working in the apprenticeship program since the start of the school year.

Gupton said there will be some class instruction each day, and some after school work too.

The students will skype with Dataseam Apprentice Manager John Soward daily, and will receive their assignments.

Gupton said the idea for the apprenticeship program isn't something new, and the U.S. Department of Labor, the Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet and the Kentucky Labor Cabinet approve it. He noted that the apprenticeship program could prove valuable to the participating students in terms of future jobs.

"These are industry standard certifications. They are not the end all be all. You often, in IT, have a set of what's called stackable credentials. As technology is always changing, each of these certifications in different areas continue to build upon one another," Gupton said.

He said that there is tremendous need in a couple of different IT areas, which he hopes the program can partially help to fill, such as state and local governments and financial services.

"From a four-year perspective, we really have a demand for IT-oriented individuals to go into the space science program at Morehead State University," Gupton said. "There is a lot going on there we could see these kids doing."

Gupton said that by summer 2020, Dataseam hopes to have at least two apprentices in each of the 38 actively participating school districts it serves.

82nd Rep. Regina Huff noted that the program will also provide the students with an opportunity to earn scholarships at the University of Louisville and Morehead State University.

### **Dataseam initiative**

Dataseam was founded in 2004 with an initial primary focus to bring computers to schools in order to provide computing power for cancer research. During the day, local students use the computers for school work and classroom assignments. At night, the computers are networked together in order to provide computer processing power for cancer research.

"We needed a cancer research infrastructure in the state of Kentucky to advance the work that was going on from Buck's for Brain researchers to take it to the next level. The way that we were able to do it was we created the super computer with the byproduct of it and most visible product of it being these schools in eastern and western coal produce regions were receiving work stations," Gupton explained.

Huff added that since 2005, Whitley County has received 579 computers through Dataseam's cancer initiative in coal counties, and has supplied about 24,000 top of the line work stations to schools in 49 counties.



“Over the next year two years, around 2,500 more work stations will be going into participating school districts. It is exciting that our district will be one of those recipients, and part of the next wave of instruction and continual training that Dataseam is providing to particular participating coal counties across the commonwealth,” Huff said. “This program’s work is truly immeasurable.”

Senate President Robert Stivers added that the link between Whitley and Hancock counties is that both are in coal producing regions. The state initially funded the Dataseam cancer research initiative through coal severance funding, but it is now funded out of general fund dollars, he noted.

### **Important to Kentucky**

Kentucky Education and Workforce Cabinet Deputy Secretary Josh Benton, who is a Cumberland College alumnus, noted that the cabinet really believes in apprenticeship.

“Apprenticeship at its core blends practical learning and classroom learning. We know all across the board when you blend those outcomes improve whether it is graduation rates or traditional grades and performance. Also, students are better prepared for the jobs of today and tomorrow when they participate in an apprenticeship style education,” Benton noted. “It is an exciting opportunity. We want to see more of these opportunities around the state.”

Benton added that the program is important because there are over 120,000 open jobs across Kentucky in all different types of sectors, and about 80 percent of those jobs require some type of IT background.

“When we look at the economy today and the skills that are needed, and what is going to be needed down the road, some sort of knowledge of IT – of how systems work and how to network – is going to be critical whether you work in manufacturing, whether you work in transportation, whether you work at a bank, whether you work in education it matters. It is a cross sectional skill across the board,” he said.

“To see Whitley County and Hancock County partner with Dataseam is not just an exciting opportunity for the students, but it is going to make huge impacts and dividends for the future of our economy.”