

Access^{and} Opportunity

Policy Options for
Interactive Video
in K–12 Education

August 2003

Advice from a national symposium
of practitioners in October 2002

Organized by:

Northeast & Islands Regional 
Technology in Education Consortium

Northwest Educational 
Technology Consortium

South Central Regional 
Technology in Education Consortium

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Executive Summary

The new generation of distance education technology, interactive videoconferencing (IVC), offers support for the most promising strategies for active learning. Unlike the one-way nature of satellite course delivery that made interaction more difficult and time-consuming, the two-way communication of IVC offers the opportunity for teachers, students, and remote experts to engage in a more natural and lively give-and-take that captures the goals of current school reform efforts. While the technology does not guarantee it, the interactivity makes it easier for teachers, rather than appearing as “talking heads,” to take on the role of instructional guides, allowing students to forge their own path toward understanding.

Some of the nation’s leading IVC experts and practitioners in the K–12 use of IVC, meeting at an invitational symposium in October 2002, proposed a number of bases for policies that would greatly enhance the technology’s huge potential for engaging students and enriching instruction. Symposium participants—who represented school districts, regional service centers, and state education agencies from around the United States—identified several key needs in the field:

- Ready access to shared experience through a clearinghouse
- Internet and video links between users and resources
- Research
- Federal support for information dissemination and staff development
- Widespread access to broadband (high-speed) lines

What IVC ultimately offers, the participants agreed, is access and opportunity. If educators choose to use the full capabilities, the technology can offer students face-to-face access to people, places,

