

An ear for learning

Sound system exceeds expectations



Mr. Steve Amerkhanian uses the sound system during computer class.

St. Joseph Catholic School in Erie, Mich. has been using a sound system in its classrooms, which has been found to positively affect its student's performance. Noted improvements in student comprehension, reading and pronunciation skills and overall literacy achievements have been documented, according to school administrators.

Through the use of a microphone headset worn by the teacher, students can more clearly hear teachers' directions and commentary from a distance or when his, or her, back is turned.

The Phonic Ear System was brought to the attention of St. Joseph School through parent **Ann Johnson**, who is an occupational therapist. Two and a half years ago, Johnson began researching the sound system and discovered that students' performance can greatly improve with the use of the system. Through the generosity of several funding sources, Johnson has been able to raise a total of \$10,000. The kindergarten through grade 4 classrooms have used the sound

system for two years, and beginning with the 2006-2007 school year, all classrooms will be equipped with it.

"I didn't think it would benefit me or my students," said **Christine Mercurio** who has taught at the school for 11 years. Now Mercurio has a much different opinion of the phonic system. "I've noticed a big difference in the student's attention span. They're especially staying focused during group activities," she said.

Students who have benefited the most are those with mild forms of hearing impairments, attention deficit disorders, auditory processing disorders, middle ear dysfunction/infections, decreased listening skills, speech and language delays and learning disabilities.

"If the children have a hearing or attention problem, they're better able to pay attention. And the teacher doesn't have to yell to get their attention," Johnson said.

