

School 1-to-1 device still in study mode

Written by Brenda Johnson Brandt

Putting a computer device such as an iPad or laptop into each student's hands in Holyoke School District Re-1J continues in study mode. This was reported by Principal Kyle Stumpf for the district's Technology Committee at the Wednesday, April 23 school board meeting.

A year ago, the Technology Committee visited schools in Goodland, Kan., to look at successful 1-to-1 device programs. The committee received the message "to be continued" last April.

Since then, the committee researched different devices that could be used in such a 1-to-1 program. Two vendors presented information about three devices: iPad, Windows-based tablet and a general laptop.

Recently the committee created a 10-question survey for staff members. Stumpf reported that 60 percent of the staff is behind a 1-to-1 initiative, while 40 percent is not.

While the Technology Committee feels they're moving in the right direction, members don't feel the staff percentage support is high enough to move forward this coming year.

The committee also expressed the need for an additional information technology person in the district as they move forward. Stumpf noted that the projected 65 days of testing next year is a big concern for one IT person to handle as use of the computers for testing increases.

The staff survey also suggested that the district continue to build and utilize the technology in place before looking at a 1-to-1 initiative. Stumpf said they want to make sure the infrastructure is OK.

Overall, technology needs to remain a priority in the school district. The tech committee's goal is to implement 1-to-1 devices in the next few years but to do it correctly.

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Superintendent Bret Miles said he feels good about this process as the committee slows down and digs through the data.

Questioned about textbook purchases being suspended in recent years, Miles emphasized that was not done as a result of using technology for texts. Rather, it resulted from cuts needed because of the negative factor.

Standard of Excellence survey reviewed

District perception survey results were presented to the board last week by Standard of Excellence Committee chair Tiffany Watson.

She noted that this is the fifth year for the survey, and it was done on SurveyMonkey for the first time. Laptops were set up at parent-teacher conferences so that parents could respond right there. Results were returned much faster as a result.

Parents, staff and students were surveyed, and the committee spent two meetings reviewing the data, said Watson.

Overall, the data was very positive. The committee reviewed the percentage responses for the four answer options to each question. Options were: strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree.

Watson said they looked at areas that were negative to make suggestions for focus groups to look at, but the negatives were very low numbers. She noted that the committee could see improvement in areas that were highlighted for review in past years.

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Two new questions were added to the survey, but otherwise it was consistent with last year's.

From here, the concern areas will go to focus groups with students. Based on survey results, Watson said the committee recommends that focus groups look at the academic opportunity center and its perception and goal.

Watson reiterated that the committee is just reporting on the positive negatives, meaning the lows are not devastatingly low but are what's being reported as the negatives. The overall data report is very positive. Focus groups are helping to make positive changes, she added.

PIE carnival is tremendous success

Also reporting on the April 11 Partners in Education carnival, Watson said the change of venue to the Event Center was very positive, with profit more than doubling from last year.

PIE will be giving \$5,000 back to the school, with \$4,500 in several grants that teachers are currently applying for and a \$250 donation grant to each building.

2A basketball playoff structure being debated

Board member Jon King reported that the Colorado High School Activities Association Legislative Council voted at its April 17 meeting to change the structure of the 2A basketball playoffs.

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However, athletic directors throughout the state are looking to make a plea to retain the structure that has been used for several years. They will be meeting in September to attempt to get the decision amended. The Legislative Council will then vote next January, with their decision to be in effect for the 2015 playoff season.

Other business

In other business April 23, the Re-1J board:

—accepted the resignation from Josh Rahe as the JR/SR High language arts teacher.

—enjoyed presentations from two 21st Century Skills class projects for community service. Eva Penzing, Kaetlyne Overton and Sean Asplin told about the Senior Senior Prom project. Malena McWilliams and Kaely Zilla reported on their hunger-fight project which included making and selling a cookbook.

—approved a resolution proclaiming May 5-9 as National Teacher Appreciation Week.

—designated board members Kim Killin and Jon King to hand out diplomas at graduation.

—heard a Rural Agility Project update from Miles. He said he believes interest is picking up in the project to find potential solutions to rural education challenges. The eastern Colorado working group now includes seven school districts and three BOCES units, and there is also a Western Slope group.

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