

Local Schools



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Poplar Bluff School Engages in Pilot Program

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story submitted by eMule Newsletter

Thirty years ago when Alana Robertson, Poplar Bluff school board member, began teaching in the school district, there was not one computer in the whole building.

With no computers in the building, there of course weren't any in the classrooms, which is totally different from today's classrooms.

Recently, 100 MacBook Airs have been distributed to the students in Junior High at Poplar Bluff as part of a pilot program. The pilot program causes the laptops to be rotated in each of the classrooms for two-week periods.

Kathy Beck, junior high social studies department chair stated, "I've always been interested in incorporating technology in the classroom. I was one of the first in the building to use PowerPoint, and I immediately noticed students' scores go up."

The main goal of this digital conversion initiative is to get a computer in the hands of ever junior and senior high student by the 2014-2015 school year.

Superintendent Christ Hon first conceived the initiative among reading in education digests about how Mooresville Graded School District in North Carolina provided a laptop to all fourth grade students, and has since seen their academic achievement increase significantly.

During the Missouri Association of School Administrators conference in March, Hon and assistant superintendent met with Mooresville Superintendent, Dr. Mark Edwards, the pioneer of the one-to-one laptop initiative.

After speaking among teachers and school board members, it became obvious that almost everyone was all for the initiative and thought it could only improve the academic studies of the students.

Each student would be supplied a special backpack in which to protect the laptop that they will also be allowed to bring home. Additional insurance policies will be offered for parents to take out on the devices. A fee of \$50 is likely for the laptop usage, with payments plans or school service options available.

Greater Poplar Bluff Area Chamber of Commerce President Stave Halter stated, "I am thoroughly excited about this program and glad to see Poplar Bluff R-I be proactive on any issue that deals with technology. I think his will help give our students a competitive edge."

One of the arguments used to gain the computers for each student was that many times when asked to do a project at home, some students would bring in work that looked like it came straight out of a print shop, while other students used paper and crayons. It is said that providing the computers will close the gap between the have and have-nots.

As Poplar Bluff school district takes the first step in participating in the laptop pilot program, many other school districts have their eyes focused on getting involved as well.

It is true that in a few years, some schools may be guilty of getting rid of all or most their textbooks in order to send children home with a computer to do homework.

Technology is truly changing society one school district at a time!

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