Local Schools

Sparklight Donates 50 Computers to Lake Road

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Sparklight recently donated 50 Google Chromebooks to Lake Road Elementary to be used to teach coding during latchkey as the school works toward its goal of incorporating STEM into its curriculum.

"Now more than ever, student access to computers is a necessity," Sparklight Senior Vice President of Technology Services Ken Johnson stated in a press release. "By donating Chromebooks, we're giving students in need the opportunity to use technology that will ultimately prepare them for a progressively digital workforce."

A company representative reached out to Lake Road at the end of last school year, as part of its Chromebooks for Kids initiative. Sparklight has given away over 2,000 devices to Title I elementary schools in the markets where it offers broadband services.

The devices have allowed third grade teacher Michelle McDaniel to start the 'Kids Who Code' club during which she uses resources from Code.org and the Girls Who Code nonprofit to teach students how to code. Upward of 40 participants, grades 1-6, gather for about an hour and a half in the gymnasium each morning.

"My hope is that it will foster an interest in computer sciences," McDaniel explained. "In this way, hopefully, the kids can also become interested in robotics and engineering."

While the elementary schools are 1:1, the additional laptop cart brings Lake Road closer to realizing its vision of having a space dedicated to science, technology, engineering and math, according to Principal Rondi Vaughn.

"Having these computers in a cart for this purpose will allow us to give students the accessibility to technology while participating in these [activities] and not having to take any technology outside their classrooms," Vaughn said. "Computers are an integral component of our students' learning."
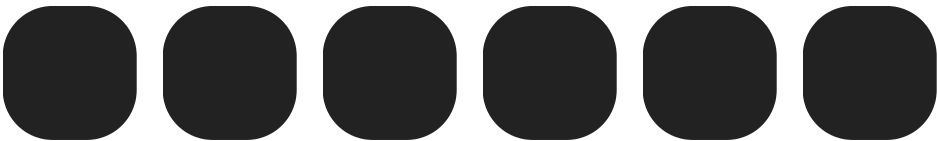
Pictured: Computer technicians Kyle Pearson (forefront) and Joe Salamone inventory Chromebooks on Tuesday, Aug. 24, in the conference room at Lake Road so teacher Michelle McDaniel (standing) can incorporate technology during latchkey.

Photo and article submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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