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Technology gets boost in schools

Friday, February 27, 2009

By JIM DANKO

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INTERACT »

AGAWAM - The School Committee has received an update of the school system's technological transformation over the past year.

School technology specialists on Tuesday outlined the work done over the past year in putting into place new hardware and software that streamlines tasks for administrators and teachers.

The technology upgrade was included in the fiscal 2009 budget, cost \$180,000, said School Superintendent Mary A. Czajkowski.

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Information technology administrator Kevin Brown, administrative information technology specialist Ann Flynn and Kathleen Poggi, the district's Internet technology and data management specialist, submitted a thick, detailed report for the committee.

The technology allows teachers to do tasks electronically, including submitting grades, taking attendance, documenting a student who is tardy, or filing discipline reports. Czajkowski said the School Department obtained a program called Administrator's Plus from Rediker Software, of Hampden.

"It's been a phenomenal tool and phenomenal resource for us," Czajkowski said. "This was a very good investment."

She said the technology improves communication between the school and parents. For example, she said parents can go online and view students' homework assignments.

In giving a broad update of progress over the past year, Brown told the committee that 55 computers were purchased in the summer and fall and anti-virus software was installed. Additionally, he described a new backup system that would allow the recovery of data in the event of a system failure.

He told the committee about free software called "teacher bulletin board" that would allow teachers to collaborate throughout the district.

"If we can get people interested in using it, it will take off like wildfire," Brown said.

The superintendent and School Committee had nothing but praise for the progress made by the technology specialists.

"It was a leap expending the funds back when we did," said School Committee Vice Chairman Anthony C. Bonavita. "It sounds like it was a great decision."

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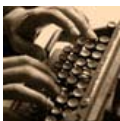
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