

# Technology

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Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. "It's a great tool. Easy to use and kids can do some very sophisticated stuff with it." The old junior high had a black and white TV studio in 1969, which was converted to a color broadcast 12 years later. They broadcasted out over cable channels then, but the new system will broadcast out to the entire school network over newly laid fiber optic cables put in with the construction. "We can push audio video right over our fiber optics right now," said Wega. "Its phenomenal."

Each building in the district has a Smart Board, consisting of a special mobile projection screen on a cart that can be moved from one classroom to another as needed. On the cart is a laptop and a regular projection system and what is projected on the laptop is then projected onto the Smart Board. At this point it is really nothing different than using a regular screen.

"But the nice thing about a Smart Board is you can make it smart with a program called Smart Technologies," said Laura Metachak, educational technologist. This allows the user to touch the Smart Board itself, like a touch screen, using their hand like a mouse. Whatever is happening on the laptop then happens on the screen.

"We've got teachers using them in a multitude of ways," explained Metachak. "Kindergarten kids use it to play in math games and we have students who are using it for presentations. They will do their presentation using a



Lake-Lehman Biology teacher Gail Keen confers with two of her students, Erin Warner and Sandra Ogin. "It's a neat tool. Teaches a lot of background before class," said Keen

Smart Board because it allows them to use the technology but stand in front of the classroom, which is one of the things you couldn't do in the past because you have to actively use the laptop, so your back was to your audience."

Lake-Lehman School District isn't going wireless yet, but with the help of Dr. Robert Fumanti and the Aster Group, the district received \$150,000 in grant mon-

ey to buy computer equipment this past year, according to their technology coordinator, Roseanne Ragnacci, so they have approximately two computers per classroom, most of them new or less than three years old.

It's a good starting foundation but it pales compared to Dallas's four per classroom. Each building in the district has been networked together in recent years, as has the Dallas district, but

Dallas is in its third generation of networking, this one with new fiber optics.

Lake-Lehman has one instructor teaching the required course of Intro to Computers and Frank Jones teaches two C++ classes, a programming course, and one web page design class. Jones is retiring at the end of this school year and no mention has been made of his replacement. "The board has to accept his resigna-

tion before we can go out and actively search for a candidate," said John Oliver, Lake-Lehman High School principal. The board will accept Jones resignation Tuesday evening.

Dallas has five high school instructors teaching computer classes; the required freshman Completion Project class and numerous electives, including C++, web design, Microsoft Excel, Access and Front Page. Dr. Speziale said they were looking for more instructors as the courses were "very heavily populated."

Ragnacci asked for a \$50,000 budget from the Lake-Lehman school board for next school year at the Feb. 5 meeting and a technical assistant to help free her from some of the simpler repair tasks. Dallas runs a \$250,000 yearly budget not including salaries. At the meeting, board member James Mahon expressed concern over the budget amount and the number of computers per classroom, questioning if it was enough. "Computers are becoming a bigger part of our lives and I'd like to know what we need," he said.

At the March 5 meeting, Mahon said that although Ragnacci had answered many questions for him, he was still not at ease with the status of the technology department and would like further information. "I totally don't understand the structure of our technology department," he said. "What is its focus? Where are we going with it?"

Other board members expressed concerns about and interest in improving the technolo-

gy department, among them Angelo DeCesaris and Sheila Gionfriddo. "I agree with Jim," said DeCesaris. "I'd like to know where our technology department is going. We had the technology coordinator stand here and tell us there is no one directing technology and the curriculum. There's nobody addressing that." He added, "I don't know what we're doing with technology if we're not getting it to the children in the curriculum, and in that regard where are we going?"

"It's definitely needed in our district and I'm going to have some more questions," added Mahon. "I think we can really make it a very viable department within Lehman and I don't know if I can vote right now for a new person without knowing exactly what everybody's doing inside the department."

The technology coordinator of Lake-Lehman School District does not have the administrative authority of Dallas' director of technology, an ACT 93 position, meaning where Wega can make departmental decisions, streamlining the red tape to some degree, Ragnacci's hands are tied.

Ragnacci said there are a few things she would like to see done, including more staff development and curriculum changes, written across the curriculum.

"Teachers always say, 'What am I giving up?'" Ragnacci said, when they are approached with new ideas about integrating technology in the curriculum. "I'd also like to see a technology team with a representative from each building," she added.

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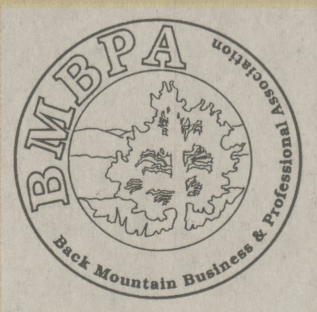
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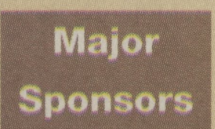


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