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Pilot program allows DHS students to go high-tech

Students now allowed to take laptops and personal computing devices to school.

By SARAH HITE
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The Dallas High School has gone mobile – in terms of computing, that is.

The school began its one-to-one pilot program on Tuesday, allowing students to take laptops and other portable computing devices to school. The program is a test run for next year when

students will be allowed to take their own computers to the high school. Laptops will be provided for those students who cannot take their own in to school or for those who do not have one of their own.

Currently the district is equipped with one laptop for every two students, but next year the program is going one-to-one and the pilot program will be a way for teachers, students and administrators to better understand its effects on the way materials are taught and how students learn.

Bill Gartrell, the district's tech-

MORE INFO

For more information about the Dallas High School's one-to-one pilot program, visit www.dallassd.com.

nology director, said the program has been a long time coming – about three years, to be exact.

He said the district needed to be able to fund the project before it could get off its feet, including getting a faster Internet connection, going wireless and preparing for cloud computing.

"With the budget cuts, this was planned out of the technology budget," he said.

Cloud computing refers to utilizing e-mail, data space, applications and other functions hosted by another company via the Internet. Cloud computing frees computer space on personal devices and saves money spent on software that could perform the same functions.

Gartrell estimates about 75 percent of high school students plan to bring a computer from home, which will keep his staff

very busy – he and a team of interns and part-time staff will need to register and equip each computer with anti-virus software, as well as answer calls to solve tricky computer issues.

"This year, we've had 1,300 calls to our help desk," he said. "Last year, we only had 450."

Google will host the Dallas program and students can e-mail teachers, retrieve homework and save assignments on the system accessed through a special website.

"We're not spending money on software," said Gartrell. "Google apps is free to schools."

Cloud computing will also give more responsibility to students in terms of saving work for personal use – while Gartrell said the server at Dallas is backed up every night, students will still need to use USB drives or other ways to save their work in the event a server goes down, or the information is somehow lost.

"Google apps is designed for short term use," he said. "Students' accounts will be removed after they graduate."

The school also has secure, filtered Internet, making it impos-

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HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Gretchen McClain and her 3-month-old daughter Paige, who was born on New Year's Eve, spend time together during the first weekend of Back Mountain Baseball acting watching Paige's step-brother Evan McClain play for the Back Mountain Yankees. The modern Mother's Day, which is being celebrated today, is held on various days in many parts of the world, most commonly in March, April, or May as a day to honor mothers and motherhood.

Supers stall on gas law

By SARAH HITE
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Zoning issues related to natural gas drilling are a concern for Dallas Township residents, and supervisors have acknowledged them – the board's vote against a publicly criticized proposed zoning amendment Tuesday was met with applause from residents.

The board did approve a resolution declaring the current zoning ordinance "invalid," giving the township 30 days to assess the inadequacies in relation to dealing with "natural gas exploration, processing, production, transmission, odorizing, metering, filtering, maintenance, communication and other related activities" proposed in the township.

The township would also have 180 days in which to provide a curative amendment to the deficiencies, which is permitted under section 609.2 of the state municipal planning code.

"These things aren't used very often," said Solicitor Thomas

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First-ever Miss Teen Pageant is winner

By SARAH HITE
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Samantha LaNunziata, 13, of Trucksville, and Mason Palissery, 15, of Dallas, held hands while they danced and lip synced to songs on the radio.

The girls wore formal dresses – LaNunziata's was black satin with sparkly décor while Palissery's was a nude, calf-length number with a lace covering – but both were barefoot.

Behind them, seven other girls applied blush to their cheeks, glanced nervously in mirrors and fidgeted with the tulle and taffeta on their own dresses.

The girls were prepping to step onstage in style for the first-ever

Miss Luzerne County Outstanding Teen 2011 competition, held last month in the Dallas Middle School auditorium.

Four girls from the Back Mountain and five others from Luzerne County competed in the event, which awarded prizes to the overall winner and the first, second, third and fourth runners up. The contest also awarded scholarships to an interview winner and a talent winner.

The overall winner, Miss Luzerne County Outstanding Teen Rebecca Zaneski of Edwardsville, won, in addition to a \$250 scholarship, a crown, a crown box, flowers, a banner, the evening gown she wore, entrance fees for the next competition level and beauty and hair care products.

For many of the girls, the pageant was their first foray into onstage primp and pomp. LaNunziata said she was once the "queen of something," but couldn't quite remember the details. The seventh-grade softball

PAGEANT WINNERS

Miss Luzerne County Outstanding Teen - Rebecca Zaneski of Edwardsville

Won a \$250 scholarship, official crown and crown box, flowers, banner, evening gown, entry fees to state competition, Mary Kay beauty products and hair care

First runner up - Alexis Selli of Nanticoke

Won a \$50 scholarship

Second runner up - Sukesha Ray of Mechanicsburg

Won a \$50 scholarship

Third runner up - Mikayla Orrson of Lehman Township

Won a \$50 savings bond

Fourth runner up - Rebecca Colwell of Wyoming

Won a \$50 savings bond

Talent winner - Sukesha Ray for singing "Wishing You Were Somehow Here Again" of Phantom of the Opera

Won a \$100 scholarship

Interview winner - Rebecca Zaneski for her platform "B.E.C.K.Y. (Basic Exercising Can Keep You) Healthy"

Won a \$100 scholarship

player wasn't used to dresses and makeup, but thought the pageant was a fun way to get out of her shell.

She was urged to sign up by current Miss Pennsylvania Outstanding Teen Jocelyn Gruber, who spoke to Dallas Middle School students about bullying earlier this year.

"Jocelyn came and talked to me and my mom," said LaNunziata. "I don't normally like to dress up but I wanted to have fun and meet new people. I thought it was going to be scary but it's not."

LaNunziata had about a month to shop for dresses, practice her talent and develop a platform - a community service organization



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Mason Palissery and Samantha LaNunziata offer comfort to each other during the tense moments before the contest begins.

or campaign, eventually choosing to work at stopping animal abuse.

"You always see it on TV, animals being neglected," she said. "And my dog was abused before we rescued him. His name is Conan."

Six judges – including Dallas Middle School Principal Tom

Duffy – kept score to eventually name a winner at the event. Judges were briefed at a conference earlier in the day, and also held private interviews with each of the girls prior to the event.

"These qualified contestants shattered any stereotypes of pag-

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