

Oakridge School District Goes Wireless

The Oakridge School District has applied for and received a significant federal grant that will help bring technology to the learning experience of our local students. Under Title IID of the No Child Left Behind Act, school districts were permitted to submit a lengthy application to secure the necessary funding to implement technology-enhanced programs. Approximately \$2.9 Million was available to the state of Oregon. Thirteen grant applications were accepted and all five Lane County districts (Oakridge, South Lane, Creswell, Springfield and Eugene) that applied were approved. Lane County secured about one-third of the \$2.9 Million and Oakridge's portion was over \$220,000. For a community the size of Oakridge and Westfir, this funding can make a big difference in both how teachers teach and how students learn.

The primary goals of this grant are: 1. Increase student achievement in the areas of writing and mathematics, 2. Improve the teaching effectiveness of teachers and 3. Improve student access to technology. To accomplish these goals, the district has purchased a wireless mobile lab for each school that consists of 24 laptop computers on a rolling cart. Teachers will be able to bring the technology directly to their classroom and immediately have their students engaged in a true active-learning environment. Teachers also received laptops and projectors to use in their classrooms to present and reinforce curriculum and to help them become more proficient at delivering technology-enhanced instruction.

Students will be learning how to properly organize, research, review, edit and revise their writing using technology that is both more accessible and more efficient. Math students will learn about interactive websites and use graphing calculators to help them solve real-world problems.

The school district will be tracking student achievement during the course of the grant activities to ensure that academic progress is being made. The grant's coordinator will be assisting all eighteen teachers involved with the grant to provide technical and teaching support using technology to deliver the curriculum.

The 2004 Ed Tech grant has created quite a buzz within the schools. Students are eager to use the laptops for their schoolwork and teachers are excited to have the opportunity to use cutting edge technology and teaching methods to enhance the learning experience of students.

Later this year, the district will be sponsoring a Technology Night in order for community members to see how new technology can spur new learning innovations. For more information about the grant, contact the Ed Tech Grant Coordinator, John Maklary, at jmaklary@lane.k12.or.us.