

Coventry school administration asks for more

Looking for \$400,000 to re-open school, buy laptops

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COVENTRY – School district officials are requesting a \$400,000 increase from the town to reopen Oak Haven Elementary School for pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten and to provide one-on-one technology support next year starting with one grade.

Coventry Assistant Superintendent Michael Convery said the total budget for next year is \$67,046,905 and wanted to

make it clear that the \$400,000 request will only be used for these two purposes and will not go towards any increase in teachers' salaries.

The school committee is requesting \$100,000 to reopen Oak Haven Elementary School as a pre-Kindergarten/early learning center, which will allow for more space to be opened in the district's other schools so computer centers might be created where students can train for state assessments.

"We would take the pre-Kindergarten

classes and teachers from Tiogue, Blackrock and Hopkins Hill Elementary Schools and move them to Oak Haven," said Convery.

Convery said the funds for Oak Haven would include fire code upgrades, security for the front entrance and general preparations to get the building acceptable for use, among other things. It will also have computer labs which can be used to train for the assessment as well, considering it is too costly to be able to provide small laptops

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File photo

Oak Haven elementary's re-opening has Coventry school department officials asking for more money in next year's budget.

School officials ask for more money in budget

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for every student right away.

“It’s clear we need more room in the schools so it would be very beneficial to open Oak Haven,” said Coventry School Superintendent Michael Almeida, during a January school committee meeting.

The laptops, which will be utilized initially by either the sixth- or ninth-grade students to start, will cost an estimated \$300,000 and will be used for the 2015 PARCC assessment, which will provide information to educators to make sure students in 3-12 are on track to pursue a college education.

“Our idea is get provide the devices to one grade level per year so eventually, every student in every grade will have one,” said Convery.

Almeida said the small laptops are designed with certain types of soft-

ware and have been approved by the state to use for this type of testing.

The state assessment will be conducted in May 2015, which gives Almeida a relatively short amount to ask the town council for funding and obtain enough devices so every student can take the assessment; all work must be done on a small laptop. Almeida explained that the types of devices along with all the necessary warranties, necessary upgrades and all assistance with wireless.

He wants to start with two grades and as time goes on, outfit more grades.

“The idea is to make it a yearly expense to continually be able to upgrade and provide laptops for all students in grades 3-12,” said Almeida.

Without these laptops, he said earlier, it will be impossible to prepare students for the test.



Mike Almeida