

Preparing for Testing in Coventry

Coventry Super proposes laptops for test prep

Almeida asks town council for assistance in helping district get ready for assessment



File Photo

Oak Haven Elementary School has been the focus of several proposals in the past, and the latest has it being proposed as an early-learning center to open up space in Coventry's other schools for computer centers.

KENDRA LEIGH MILLER
Kmillier@ricentral.com

COVENTRY — The calendar year hasn't flipped to 2013 yet but already Coventry School Superintendent Mike Almeida is thinking ahead to prepare students for the 2015 PARCC assessment and part of that, he said, requires money for laptops.

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment takes the place of the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) testing but has the same purpose. It is a series of

reading, writing, math and science achievement tests that were developed to assess students in response to the federal 2005 No Child Left Behind program.

The PARCC assessment will provide information to educators to make sure students in grades 3-12 are on track for to pursue a college education.

The laptops, which will be utilized initially by 800 sixth and ninth grade students to start, will cost an estimated \$300,000.

Almeida said these 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 only 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 then, as time goes on, have the ability

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to outfit more grades. The idea is to make it a yearly expense and continually be able to upgrade and provide laptops for all students from third-graders to seniors in high school.

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

In connection with providing these laptops, Almeida is also 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 schools so a computer center can be created where students can train for the assessment.

“It’s clear we need more room in the schools so it would be very beneficial to open Oak Haven,” said the Superintendent.

Almeida would like to work with the town council to see if there’s any way they can help the school district come up with this money with the understanding of just how difficult the financial situation is in town.

“We know these are pending conversations,” said Almeida. “We have a good relationship with the town and everyone has been very transparent because we all understand the challenges.”

Because it’s a state test, he said every town and city is working hard to see how they can fund these laptops.