

## Wireless Connections in Coventry

# Classrooms first, others next for school wi-fi

## Priority high for Google Summit's late-February kickoff

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COVENTRY— Wireless internet service, also known as Wi-Fi, will now be able to be accessed in Coventry's public schools, with the network's top priority being Coventry High School. Thanks to a \$350,000 grant through the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) that was awarded to Coventry, Superintendent Dr. Mike Almeida said Wi-Fi will be available for auditoriums, school offices and cafeterias.

The wireless initiative began in the summer

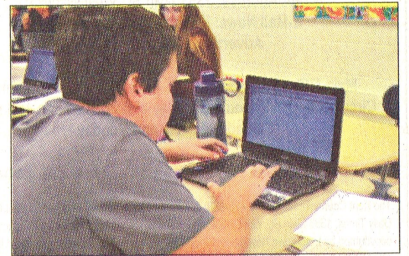
when the grant through RIDE was applied for to help make Coventry schools have 100 percent wireless access. School Committee members, Ann Dickson, presented the wireless initiative to the town council on Monday Nov. 24, during the school's report.

"The priority is the high school to be in preparation for the Google Summit," Dickson said. "Coventry schools will participate in the largest educational event in the world with the goal having 10 million students around the world participate in learning especially with computer programming skills."

The Coventry School District will host the

2015 Google Summit from Feb. 28 though March 1, at Coventry High School. It is a professional development opportunity where Google certified trainers, solution providers, practicing administrators and representatives from Google Education teams to answer questions, provide demonstrations and hold workshops.

Superintendent Almeida explained that the grant initially was just to cover classrooms and instructional areas within the school with Wi-Fi access but after RIDE distributed funds



File photo

Classrooms in Coventry are wired as part of the school department's 1:1 technology initiative.

See SCHOOL, Page A-3

# Schools going totally wireless?

*Continued from Page A-1*

to other schools in Rhode Island who were awarded the same grant, he said there was some money left over to extend the access to auditoriums, cafeterias and school offices for qualifying schools.

Coventry schools are working with a vendor who is identifying locations and the amount of access they would need then will go to RIDE to classify how much more money it would cost. A new application will be submitted, Almeida said, then

RIDE will determine how much to award.

"We are confident that we will receive some, if not all, of the award and be able to make more places in the school wireless," Almeida said. "Not having complete wireless access was becoming inconsistent because other Coventry schools were 100 percent wireless and others aren't."

The wireless initiative is its second phase, with the first phase being the coverage of internet access in classrooms and instructional areas. Almeida

said that phase two includes the application for additional grant money that would bring access to 100 percent, he explained.

Having all schools have unlimited wireless access is something President Barack Obama is supporting by bringing high speed internet connecting 99 percent of students nationwide by 2018.

President Obama said in June of 2013 that high speed Internet is imperative on improving college attainability and helping students prepare to compete in a global economy.