



Jessica Boisclair • Daily Times

Caitlin Benson, who helped Cheryl Saucier get the grant, and Saucier hold the giant check presented to Western Coventry Elementary School.

# Grant brings chromebooks to Coventry

## Western Coventry gets \$10,000 technology grant for classroom tech

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COVENTRY— Students at Western Coventry Elementary School will now have the opportunity to use chromebooks in their classrooms thanks to a \$10,000 grant from code.org.

Principal Amy Anzalone explained that the grant was applied for by fifth grade teacher Cheryl Saucier while drawing up her professional development plan.

“Teachers in Coventry are required to write a professional development plan in order to improve their practice,” Anzalone said. “Cheryl’s professional development plan was about ways for her to improve her use of technology in the classroom.”

Saucier said she chose this topic for her professional development because it was something she wanted to incorporate a little more into the classroom because students seem to learn more when using computers.

“Whenever you have a student sitting behind a computer, whether it’s math, science or a reading component I can reach out to all levels of learners using technology but it was something I needed to become a little more comfortable with so that’s why I wrote it into our professional development,” she said.

# Chromebooks will soon be arriving at Western Coventry

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While she was searching for ways to integrate technology, Saucier said, she stumbled upon an event called Hour of Code on code.org, the sponsors of the grant.

This same website was also hosting a lottery to receive a grant for \$10,000, which Saucier said she applied for.

Anzalone explained that Western Coventry was one of 57 schools to enter the lottery, which takes place in every state.

This week, Saucier said, was Computer Science Week, which ties in greatly with the grant website's initiatives.

"Every student in our school is logging on for one hour this week and they're learning about computer programming and careers that they might be interested in," Anzalone said earlier in the week. "They watch videos and practice

doing computer programming activities which look like a game but teaches them how to program."

Saucier explained that this week every class has had the opportunity to meet together and practice and learn about computers.

She said her fifth grade class paired up with the younger students and talked them through the programming tutorials and games.

"The programs on the website have 'Angry Birds' themes so it speaks to the younger students," she added. "One of the games, the students tell the computer what to do and on the site, once the puzzle is completed, the students can see all the computer coding that they just did to solve that puzzle."

Anzalone explained that the district has a strategic plan which focuses on technology. This year, she said, many teachers are being trained on

how to integrate computers into their classrooms.

With the help of the grant, Western will now be able to purchase 40 chrome books for the classes.

She said each teacher will have the chance to sign out a cart and take the chrome books to their classrooms to use as part of the curriculum.

"We have a lot of technology that is part of our every day learning," she added. "Our reading programs, our math programs and our science programs all have technology components so it really gives us an opportunity to use technology for what it's meant for and have enough of it for all students to participate."

While 40 chrome books are not enough for the entire school, she said the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is hard at work trying to raise funds in order to supply each student with their own computer.