

Press Release



Battle Ground Public Schools

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Qwest tech grants: Daybreak's double-barreled-distinction

There was plenty of high-fiving on the Daybreak campus Tuesday as the news spread that teachers at both the middle school and the primary school are winners of \$10,000 grants from the Qwest Foundation.

That's \$10,000 for *each* school.

That's *two* of out of the *nine* 2011 Qwest Teachers & Technology grants throughout the state of Washington.

“Providing funds that allow educators to be progressive and innovative through technology is something we are proud of, especially at a time when schools are forced to operate on limited budgets,” said Kirk Nelson, Qwest’s state president in making the announcement along with the state Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

Daybreak Primary School

First grade teacher Deb Ortner is the official winner of this grant, although she is quick to credit Jessica Lee, a long-term substitute third-grade teacher at the school, as a key player in winning the grant. Lee was a student teacher for Ortner last year and was of considerable help in filling out the massive grant application.

The money will be buy 15 Apple iPad 2s. Here’s how the OSPI announcement describes plans for the devices:

“Scripts tuned to the level of each grade 1 reader are the creative fodder for six and seven year olds who will practice their out-loud reading skills, video tape their best performances and, at project’s end, share their digital presentations with online pen pals in Britain and Bahrain. . . . Ortner and Lee have set learning goals based on state standards for reading and educational technology.”

Ortner said the grant will also cover purchase of cords to connect the iPads to a document camera plus other associated equipment and wiki* applications. “We’ll be connecting students to the world, she said. “The iPads will make a positive impact on students in every subject.”

Daybreak Middle

This was team effort by the school's fifth-grade teachers: Mike Walsh, Kristina Wambold, Marion Baty, Rachael Derbin and Ruth Tabet-Mendoza. The money will be used for the purchase of 54 seven-inch Web-enabled tablet PCs.

That's enough to equip two of the five fifth-grade classrooms at a time, so the teachers will be sharing the devices.

Assistant Principal Brian Hanson said the tablets will "make technology more of the learning process and not just a tool to achieve an end. They will allow teachers to integrate the technology with learning, fostering creativity.

Here's an excerpt from the OSPI announcement:

"This dedicated team of 5th-grade teachers designed a learning project around OSPI's Whose Rules assessment, (which) integrates learning goals for social studies, educational technology, and reading and writing into the learning experience.

". . . Teachers will guide the learning process as students choose a public issue to research, take a stance, and present the results of their work in person and on blogs and wikis*. Each learner must be ready to discuss (his or her) position and defend its merits . . .

"There is a plethora of downloadable applications for these devices: the e-Reader tool, for example, makes it possible to support one-to-one instruction with audio playback, translation, rich visualization, and to stimulate highly capable readers to take on complex articles and research activities."

In Wambold's words, "They will open doors to research."

The possible applications include language translation programs which will "level the playing field" for students whose natural language is not English, said Tabet-Mendoza.

* **Wiki:** One definition: a website that allows the creation and editing of any number of interlinked web pages via a web browser using a simplified markup language. Another definition: a piece of server software that allows users to freely create and edit Web page content using any Web browser.

More information: www.k12.wa.us/EdTech/Grants/Competitive/QwestFoundation/default.aspx



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