Technology decisions well thought out

District 20 media teachers don't just barge ahead when it comes to technology in the school.

They methodically plan how to proceed.

"We don't go forward until we're ready," said Lori Long, junior and senior high media specialist.

For example, before buying a bunch of iPads, Long said they make sure staff has undergone professional development in how to use the technology as in the case of laptops.

"We got laptops to the teachers first, then for student use," she explained. "Our teachers have to be prepared before we move forward."

Dudley Elementary media specialist Angie Richeson said they also think long term when making technological decisions.

Besides being media specialists, both Richeson and Long wear another hat.

They help other teachers integrate technology into curriculum such as finding helpful websites, online databases, applications for iPods and more.

In addition to iPods, students have access to iPads and laptop computers.

Acquiring Kindles and eBooks is just around the corner, they said.

Long described the media center as a marriage of the traditional library and technology integration.

She noted that teachers may come to her and Richeson for help integrating technology into a research project.

“I show teachers how to get from point A to point B using technology,” Long said.

Both Long and Richeson are assisted by district technology coordinator Jo Wiggins. Richeson also gets help from technology paraeducator Jayne Eggleston of Cozad.

Within the elementary, Richeson does a lot of team teaching to help integrate technology into the classroom.

Both agreed that getting information and technology to students where they are is of paramount importance.

For example, laptops, iPods and iPads can be wheeled around on carts or kept stationary in the media center.

Because some students don’t have access to the Internet at home, they use laptops and printers in the media center.

Long noted that more electronic resources are being partnered with print.

Students may use Google Docs to collaborate with each other through the Internet and print out their finished work for a grade.

Google Docs is a free web-based application in which documents, presentations and spreadsheets can be created, edited and stored online.

Richeson noted that students don’t just use the library media solely for books anymore but enter into “a learning commons” space.

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