Board Of Education Looks To More Tech Improvements

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

Technology improvements for the Kodiak Island Borough School District are on the way, but a little clarification must come first. The Board of Education met for a special work session on Monday to discuss the continuation of the district’s Twenty-First Century Classroom Initiative, a plan that Superintendent Stewart McDonald said has been in the works for half a decade.

-- (School District Tech 1 :36 “Five years ago we began as a school district to recognize as a school district that our technology infrastructure was aging and not really keeping up with classroom instructional needs. So the school board at that time worked with administration and we went to a teaching and learning conference put on with the National School Board Association and we brought members of our tech department and administration and school board to get an idea of how we needed to proceed with evaluating our technology needs.”)

At the same time the district also hired a consultant to do a full review of the district’s technology system. It wasn’t long before the school board and administration recognized that it would take many years to budget and plan a network change to support the needs of all the schools in the district. Because of this, the district implemented a four phase classroom initiative to gradually work new technology into the classrooms.

-- (School District Tech 2 : 21 “Phase one was to, and this was three years ago, phase one was to update aspects of our network, simultaneously creating presentation suites for our teachers. So that teachers had lap tops and iPads and document cameras and projectors, things necessary to interact in a classroom with 21st century tools.”)

Phase two was two years ago and increased student access to machines. He said improvements stalled last year because of budget uncertainties.

-- (School District Tech 3 : 16 “And so this year now represents our phase three renewal replacement portion. So now that we’ve got these machines in our system how are we going to keep them renewed and replaced and make sure that’s budgeted.”)

Phase three was the intended topic of discussion during Wednesday’s work session, but McDonald said a new purchase order went beyond the scope of that phase.

-- (School District Tech 4 :25 “Along with the renewal and replacement came a 150 lap top request that our technology department and our high school was moving forward to add 150 lap tops to their program. So beyond renewal and replacement, our phase four was to further increase access to eventually get the high school to a one plus one environment, one machine for every student.”)

The lap top request was considered part of phase four, which McDonald did not expect to tackle until next year. Because the two phases became muddled at the work session, the Board of Education asked that the information for both phases be separated and brought back during their regular meeting on Monday. The phases require separate purchase orders and thus need to be discussed as separate entities.

Mcdonald said he is pleased with the thoroughness of the board in its decision making when it comes to purchases like this. He said phase three will be the focus during Monday’s meeting, but if information is still unclear the board will postpone any decisions until an October meeting.