School Seeks More Bandwidth

Wednesday, 04 February 2009

{audio}/images/stories/mp3/090204.school_bandwidth.mp3{/audio}

Jay Barrett/KMXT

Now that computers speeds don't change much from month to month any more, the latest technological must-have is high-speed Internet. The Kodiak Island School District is no different. The administration is asking the school board to expend about 56-hundred dollars more per year to boost the bandwidth from 8 megabits to 10 megabits per second. A megabit is one million bits. The fastest dial-up modems of old maxed out at 56-thousand bits. High-speed Internet in the home or a small business would likely be 1-megabit in speed.

Andy Ozols, the technology supervisor for the district, says the need for bandwidth increases constantly.

-- (Bandwidth 1 39 sec "Well basically, we ... be no restrictions.")

Currently, students are blocked from accessing sites like YouTube because of the high bandwidth demands streaming video has. Other sites are blocked because of content, he said.

The district gets its Internet from GCI, and the service, which includes the streaming video conferencing technology to the village schools, is mostly underwritten by the federal E-Rate program. Ozols said the district pays about 30-percent of the total cost of Internet service.

Ozols has been with the district for seven years, in which time he's seen the technology advance steadily. But what's really important, he said, is the attitude of the superintendants and school board toward technology:

-- (Bandwidth 2 16 sec "Hey, we've moved ahead ... opportunities for the students.")

And, as technology marches on, Ozols said a whole new world of education at a discount emerges:

-- (Bandwidth 3 26 sec "These kinds of tools ... better education to our students.")

The increase in bandwidth proposal came up at Monday night's school board work session, and the board agreed that it would be worthwhile.

###