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No more paper, no more books

> **Flowing Wells High freshmen get hand-held computers, courtesy of JTED** <

By Andrea Rivera

ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Had voters not approved the Joint Technological Education District, 50 Flowing Wells High School freshmen would not be participating in a hand-held-computer pilot program.

Last November, residents in 11 Pima County school districts, including Flowing Wells, approved the Joint Technological Education District, or JTED.

The purpose of the JTED is to enhance existing career and technical-education courses at high schools and add new programs.

"It will prepare kids to be successful in their life after high school," Flowing Wells Superintendent Nicholas Clement said about the JTED.

Current estimates have Flowing Wells receiving about \$429,000 in JTED funding for the 2007-2008 school year.

Flowing Wells will offer 28 JTED courses, including new courses in graphic arts, information-technology fundamentals and Web-page development.

One of Flowing Wells' more innovative approaches to accomplishing the JTED mission includes a pilot program that will provide hand-held computers to 50 freshmen enrolled in agriculture courses.

"It does everything a desktop can do," agriculture teacher Curt Bertelsen said of the handheld computers. "They (the students) will spend more time working on assignments because it is convenient and fun."

Students will be issued Hewlett-Packard hand-held personal computers — which cost about \$500 each — for the entire school

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year. Each computer comes with a folding keyboard.

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"Our vision is that they take the place of paper and pencil," Clement said. "This is my vision of where we need to move the classroom."

On the East Side, students at Empire High School in the Vail School District have already done away with some classroom standbys. When the school opened in 2005, students received laptops in place of textbooks.

Participating students at Flowing Wells will have the same English and social studies teachers so they can use the hand-held devices in classes other than agriculture. Those teachers will coordinate their curriculum with the curriculum in the introduction to agriculture and agriculture biology classes the students also will take.

Sophomore Jessica Phelps and senior Eric Hayes were some of the school's first students to see the new devices.

Though they're not eligible to participate in the freshman pilot program, they wish they were.

"I think they're pretty cool and they're going to be helpful, said Phelps, 14.

Added 17-year-old Hayes: "I wish I had one when I was a freshman."

Other additions to the agriculture program include one new teacher and the extension of another teacher's contract from 10 to 12 months.

Maurice Mullen, a 1997 Flowing Wells graduate, started as an agriculture teacher last week.

Before accepting the teaching position, Mullen worked in the nursery and landscape industry.

"It's going to be a good opportunity, especially for our program," Mullen said about the JTED. "We won't have to scrape by near as much."

The district also will hire an internship coordinator for the automotive-technology program.

Improvements to the school's greenhouse — where students grow tomatoes using hydroponics — and photo and auto-mechanic labs will occur over time.

Planned updates and modifications to the greenhouse include a new fertilizer-injection system, walkways that reflect light to the bottom of plants and new irrigation.

Some students will enroll in courses at the Tucson College of Beauty and Pima Community College. Most of the tuition will be covered by JTED funds.

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