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Future of schooling arrives at C.B. McMurdo

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C.B. McMurdo is adding some new technology to enhance the learning experience of its students.

Students at C.B. McMurdo School started class again on Aug. 10 and school principal Cordalee Fiveland said there are quite a few changes at the school this year.

One of them is providing laptop computers for the school's grade 7 students.

Learning the future now

"We're trying to connect to their interest and to the way the future is going to be and to what they will be using in the workforce," Fiveland said, explaining why the laptops were brought in, "We're trying to prepare them for life in the 21st century," she said.

Fiveland said that the move for C.B. McMurdo came from seeing the students, "plugged in" using new technology all the time outside of school.

The students text their friends, surf social networking sites and websites and are constantly listening to music on their iPods, explained Fiveland.

When they come to school, students have to "unplug" and adhere to more traditional learning methods. Fiveland would like to see students continue to embracing all of the technology and information they are exposed to at school as well as at home.

McMurdo's grade seven students can surf the net on their laptops via the school's wireless Internet access.

Fiveland said that the school is hoping to extend this new program to allow student-owned devices as well.

Another change for McMurdo is in its career and tech studies program. Students are now able to build Lego robots in class. Fiveland said the robots have a programmable computer chip that allows students to control the robots.

Fiveland said the new program came about by asking students what they would like to see in their career and tech studies classes.

Smartboards are another new piece of technology that will be added to McMurdo this year.

Fiveland said the school already has one of the interactive whiteboard's already and four more will be installed in the school by Christmas, hopefully over the school's October break.

Smartboard's are electronic whiteboards that allow teachers to plan lessons on their computer, and transfer images, and text, to display on the board to their class.

Technology is not the only thing being added at C.B. McMurdo though.

This year, there is a new grade to the program.

Grade 9 students are able to attend the school, and Fiveland said they are leaders at the school.

Students provide leadership

Fiveland added that school has a multi-grade grouping program that places a few students from each grade together in groups that are used during spirit days, theme days and other school functions like school carnivals that allows the older students to act as role models for the younger ones.

McMurdo is also involved in Wetaskiwin Regional Public School Division's Youth Coach program. Meredith Shaw, one of the divisions youth coaches, will work with students at C.B. McMurdo to boost their self esteem and improve their confidence.

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