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## Student assessment to expand in DeKalb

By Aracely Hernandez - Staff Writer

DeKALB - The DeKalb School District will be expanding its use of an Internet-based testing program that helps administrators assess the progress students are making toward reaching state standards in math and reading.

The school board on Tuesday approved a three-year contract to continue using the Tungsten Learning System Assessment. The online program was first used at Clinton Rosette Middle School, Littlejohn Elementary and Cortland Elementary beginning in January 2004.

The program will cost the district \$48,205 this school year. That fee will increase by 3 percent in each of the following two years. Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Linell Lasswell said the money for the initiative will come from grants including federal Title 1 funding and other supplemental state aid.

She said keeping better track of what needs to be done to improve student achievement is one of the positives of the federal No Child Left Behind Act. The federal law requires states to continuously measure student achievement and has resulted in more standardized testing.

Lasswell said that each month students take a 30-minute assessment that is designed to test their ability to meet state learning standards.

"Throughout the year they are being assessed on what they need to know at the end of the year," Lasswell said.

Reports and scores from the assessment are used by teachers to help address students' individual educational needs. Teachers also are provided with tools to help students with their deficiencies.

Huntley Middle School, Wright Elementary and Jefferson Elementary will start using the program this fall. Malta Elementary, Chesebro Elementary and Gwendolyn Brooks Elementary will be added the following year, and the last to use the program will be Lincoln Elementary and Tyler Elementary schools, Lasswell said.

She said she would like to have the program at all of the district's middle and elementary schools at the same time, but each school does not have the computers needed.

Board member Holly Wallace said she wants to encourage parent groups that raise money for the schools to consider contributing to provide computer labs at all of the district's schools.

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