

News8Austin.com

08/10/2010 06:37 PM

New schools in Central Texas going high tech

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As students get ready to head back to school, some will head to brand new buildings, where high-tech gear has become a must-have.

At Round Rock Independent School District's newest high school, Cedar Ridge, students will have access to laptops, mobile classrooms and a wireless network.

"It's a lot like a collegiate feel. The whole building is wireless. All teachers will have laptops and some of the things we're providing teachers are somewhat nontraditional," Dr. Danny Presley, Cedar Ridge High School Principal, said.

South of Cedar Ridge, in the Austin Independent School District, another new school will open for the fall. Baldwin Elementary School in southwest Austin will be completely equipped with Mac computers, laptops and ways to project students' work online. And, like Cedar Ridge, the school is also going wireless.

"The young people today are beginning to expect that kind of interactive-ness available now, and we're trying to reach them in a manner they are accustomed to," AISD Director of Construction Management Curt Shaw said.

But just as the students might get an assignment they need to complete online, the teachers have been doing a lot of homework to get up to date.

"Every one of our teachers has been trained now to use the innovation stations. That was one of the criteria in hiring. I needed to make sure teachers knew we were going to have some very innovative types of technology children could use every day in classrooms," Baldwin Elementary Principal Rosa Pena said.

"I think, if we're really going to prepare our kids for the future, we need to make sure they have the access to navigate the evolving tech world," AISD Superintendent Meria Carstarphen said.

It's a world evolving, as students and teachers learn together.

"I think they're going to teach us as much as we teach them," Presley said.

Taxpayers helped make the new technology in schools possible, as part of bond programs passed for building the new schools. Both districts are also incorporating new technology into older schools each year.