

School board to vote on pilot curriculum

By Robin J. Youngblood
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Rock Island-Milan School Board members tonight will vote whether to approve a pilot curriculum program already being used in three schools in the district.

The board meets at 6 p.m. in the Rock Island High School Library.

NovaNET is being used at Edison and Washington junior highs and at Thurgood Marshall Learning Center for a trial period that began in August. The program allows students to earn credit for courses they failed or did not complete.

Students are guided through a lesson, then take a test on the lesson. The program requires a minimum of 20 hours of work by the student. To pass the assessments, students must correctly answer 80 percent of the questions.

The courses are designed to match the Illinois Learning Standards.

"NovaNET helps teachers align instruction to the Illinois Learning Standards," said Jay Marino, assistant superintendent of curriculum. "It also helps students practice skills needed to pass courses."

This is the first year for the credit-recovery computer program and is only being used at the three schools until it can be fully assessed by teachers for its effectiveness.

It is available before, after or during school. Only 63 students can use the program at one time, Mr. Marino said, because the district was granted 63 licenses.

Teachers supervise the students while they use the pro-

gram. They were trained to use NovaNET last summer, Mr. Marino said.

While the program is being used, data will be collected, such as the number of students using it, how long it takes to complete one course and the number of credits awarded. Based on its success, the program could be expanded to be used during intercession or summer school.

In other business, the board will:

- Learn about the "school choice" requirements under the federal No Child Left Behind Act. The law mandates that students attending schools on state watch lists that have failed to make "adequate yearly progress" towards meeting performance guidelines must be allowed to attend other schools within the district.

- "Adequate yearly progress" (AYP) is the incremental amount it takes half of the students to meet standards within five years. Grant Intensive Basic is the only school in the district currently not meeting state achievement guidelines, giving it a spot on the Illinois State Board of Education Watch List.

- Consider expelling two students.

- Hear a report from Mr. Marino about the October parent/teacher conferences.

- Learn about the German American Partnership Program Proposal (GAPP) from Jens Rehder. The program will be available for Rocky's German students, according to the meeting agenda.