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# School's computers running on overload

School board is told it will cost \$445,000 to update creaking system.

By John Graves  
Staff writer

Marcellus school officials say their instructional computer system is getting so old and creaky that students and teachers don't want to use it.

**MARCELLUS** "Basically, our system is on overload," Joanne Downes, assistant superintendent for instruction, told the Marcellus school board meeting March 9.

Downes presented findings of a study by Marcellus and BOCES staff to evaluate the district's various computer systems. Findings and recommendations carry a price tag of some \$445,000.

Downes also called on the board to develop a plan that would address those findings and to provide the means to annually address technology maintenance and replacement issues.

Central to the recommendations is the replacement of 140 computers of the district's oldest computers.

"A 6-year-old computer is functionally obsolete," said board member Thomas Sopchak, a business owner who deals in the high-tech market.

The study also recommends replacement of the current server,

which has 340 computers connected to it but is able to handle 250 machines at the same time.

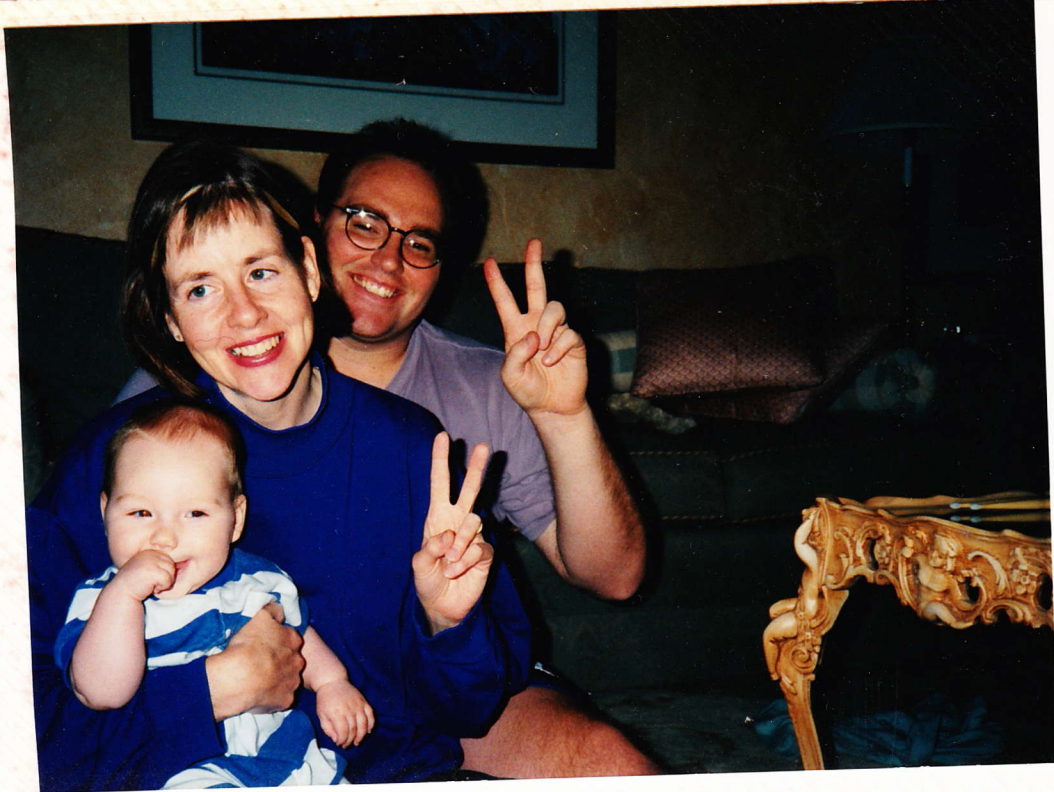
"The more people who use these computers, the more chance you have to get kicked off," Downes said.

The district has already gone ahead with another project that will upgrade a data line the computers use to tie into the BOCES Regional Information Center, which many districts use as the central network for access to the Internet and other outside information sources. That line will be able to carry 127 more times the data than the current 56K line Marcellus has. That should help alleviate data bottlenecks that are currently being experienced, Downes said.

Besides the cost of upgrading, Downes said it is estimated that the annual fees for maintenance of the system would be about \$23,000.

The district has a number of funding sources that could be used, according to the study. Included is the balance left in a special \$200,000 fund that the board set aside in the current year's budget to deal with potential Y2K problems. The current balance in that fund is \$196,000, officials said.

The district also received this year a \$100,000 legislative grant through state Sen. John DeFranco and another \$10,000 grant through state Rep. Hal Brown.



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John,  
Mary,  
Joseph*