

Halton public schools to have new computers for 2008-09 year

About 4,700 computers to be replaced

Half of the Halton District School Board's computers should be replaced in time for the next school year.

About 4,700 computers, half of the board's current complement, are expected to be updated in a phased-in process that will eventually cost the board \$6 million.

"It should start in about three weeks with the plan to be done by the end of August," Bruce Smith, the board's chief information officer, said of the first half of the master plan.

"It's one of the largest purchases the board makes," noted

Smith, who moved into the newly-created role of chief information officer about six months ago.

The board received a half-dozen proposals from interested computer providers with a four-year contract for Microsoft Windows hardware and related services awarded to IBM.

Each half of the replacement plan will cost the board about \$3 million; the second phase of the project will occur in 2010-11.

The board has an information technology (IT) budget of about \$1.3 million from which

\$800,000 per year will be used to pay for the computer renewal, said Smith.

The contract with IBM is mainly a deal for computer hardware and on-site servicing. Smith said most software used by school boards in Ontario is provided for free by the Ministry of Education.

The Halton public board has about 200 different software titles, he said.

Smith noted that about one-third of the board's computers are Macintosh models, used mainly in elementary schools in audio-visual applications.

Library construction tender awarded

Town council has awarded a construction tender for the new branch of the Milton Public Library to the tune of \$2.4 million.

The decision was made recently for the municipality to use Steelcase Construction Inc. for the library — recently named the Beaty Branch Library — that will be located on Fourth Line between Hearst and Clark boulevards.

Steelcase was the lowest of seven bidders for the project, but still came in at \$165,000 over the Town's budget due to additional costs to remove poor soils from the site and for upgrades to achieve a 'green' certification on the building.

Council also approved an extra \$80,000 for things like skylights and substituting stucco walls with slate cladding.

The additional \$245,000 will come from things like development charges and reserves.

The Town is currently seeking over \$1 million in funding through the Province's Municipal Infrastructure Investment Initiative for the construction of the new library branch.

The facility will be one storey and 11,300 square feet, set on 0.83 acres of land. It's anticipated to open next December.

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