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Students May Get Computer Credit

Orem Junior High School students with computer savvy now may take a test of their skills and earn credit for high school, and maybe even college.



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OREM, Utah (AP) -- Orem Junior High School students with computer savvy now may take a test of their skills and earn credit for high school, and maybe even college.

The school is believed to be the first junior high in Utah to offer the Internet and Computing Core Certification test.

The test measures basic computer literacy and includes questions about hardware, software and Internet navigation.

"The tests are basically a standard way that people can show that they know how to use computers," said Orem Junior High School computer technology teacher Phillip Hanney.

The state Office of Education requires a half credit in computer technology for high school graduation. As of this spring, school districts may allow students to earn the half credit and "test out" of the required course by passing the certification test.

"I think seventh grade is the time when they can really start to delve more into how to use the computer rather than just how to play with the computer," Hanney said.

The test was developed by American Fork based Certiport, which offers performance based certification programs worldwide, including Microsoft Office Specialist.

David Saedi, president and chief executive officer of Certiport, said 43 high schools in Utah are making the test available to their students.

Orem Junior High is one of about 24 junior high schools in the United States utilizing the test.

Hanney passed the certification test himself in June 2002. Since then, he has become a certified instructor for the test, and his classroom is an authorized testing center.

Forty eight of his students from seventh through ninth grade took the test several weeks ago.

Six students, three seventh graders and three ninth graders, passed all three sections of the test, while 13 students passed at least one section. Using the test results, Hanney will continue to "tweak" his program to better prepare students for the certification test.

Hanney said the certification may someday help students receive college credit as well as high school credit.

"I'm guessing by the time these students get into college, this will count as a testing out," Hanney said.

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