

## New approach to learning in New Tech



Melissa Crosby with New Tech Ambassadors and Josh Cable pose for group photo after presentation to Colleton County school board. Photo by Michelle Davis

Colleton County's New Tech program is continuing to move forward in its innovative approach to education.

New Tech is a ninth-grade pilot program in its inaugural year at Colleton County High School. Students can apply to the program and essentially make an agreement with its course instructors to lease laptops for their education. They also approach their daily studies as employees, and not as students: they can hire and fire each other from group projects and are given real-world life experiences within their core subjects.

New Tech Director Melissa Crosby updated the Colleton County School Board at Tuesday's meeting on the program's goals for the upcoming year. "This is a class that's been fantastic for the kids, and requires annual approval from the (school) board," she said, about the program's curriculum. That curriculum is focusing on teaching students the importance of giving back to their community. "In Cougar New Tech, the students feel the teachers are a guide to our success," New Tech student Shane

Hanks told the school board. Hanks and several other students spoke to the school board about why the program is so important, and why it should continue forward.

"We have one-on-one sessions with facilitators, who have daily projects for us," student Peyton Rivers said.

The New Tech class for the 2014-2015 school year will be held in studio classrooms that have full wifi benefits. Most students will take six courses per day, and New Tech students are allowed to participate in other school activities, including student council and band. "Just because you are in New Tech, doesn't mean you can't participate in opportunities happening in other parts of the building," said New Tech student Emmie Moore.

Next year, the program hopes to add a 10th grade class and six new facilitators. Eighty students will be selected for the Class of 2018, with students applying to be considered for the program. The focus for the upcoming year is to improve literacy and increase leadership among students. "We are also seeking to become the first national demonstration site" for this approach to learning, Crosby told the school board.

The board took no action on New Tech's presentation, only receiving information on the program's plans for the upcoming year.



**Heather Walters (294 Posts)**