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SCHOOL DISTRICT CREATES NEW IT PATHWAY

“Information Technology (IT) is becoming increasingly important,” according to School Superintendent Theresa Axford. “Responding to student demand, our district is creating a new pathway enabling students to register for multiple IT courses and earn nationally-recognized certificates.”

The new pathway will be identified as the “IT Elite Pathway.” It will be available in all Monroe elementary, middle, and high schools, enabling scholars to accumulate a series of certificates, beginning at 4th grade and continuing through 12th grade. Scholars can register for over 30 elective courses, aligned with Florida standards. They proceed until they are ready to take a practice exam, followed by the final exam to earn their certificate in the subject area.

“The pathway begins with introductory courses in digital literacy and progresses to higher level professional topics, such as Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Quick Books, Adobe Photoshop, JavaScript, and Python coding,” explained Caroline Bleske, Career and Technical Education Coordinator. “The certificates indicate proficiency in the relevant course material.” Ms. Bleske emphasized, “Some certificates can be earned in a few months but some require an entire semester or even a full year. Having completed each certificate, scholars advance to other topics.” She continued, “Scholars in the IT Elite Pathway will be ready for the AP Computer Science exams.”

A grant from the Golden Fleece Foundation, founded by Key West philanthropist, John Padget, is offering cash awards of \$50 for Level One certificates, \$150 for Level Two certificates, and \$300 for Level Three Certificates. Scholars receive their awards as soon as they are earned.

Scholars participating in the “IT Elite Pathway” sign intentional contracts to participate and take the certification exams. The scholars accumulating the highest number of Level Three certificates before they finish high school will be honored at their graduation, along with the exclusive Elite awards, as follows:

Silver IT Elite Scholar	3 certifications worth 9 college credits	\$ 900
Gold IT Elite Scholar	4 certifications worth 12 college credits	\$1200
Platinum IT Elite Scholar	5 certifications worth 15 college credits	\$1500

An enthusiastic supporter of the new IT Elite Pathway, John Padget said, “The Golden Fleece Foundation wants to encourage more scholars to join this initiative, accumulate some certificates and awards every year, and qualify for the Elite Scholar honors. Over \$250,000 has been allocated for this project.”

“I’m proud to support this IT pathway since the skills that scholars acquire will be increasingly important regardless of the career, college, or other opportunities open to Monroe’s teen-agers,” Padget said.

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