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Students use live chats as learning tool

Posted: Feb 5, 2009 05:00 PM



by Loren Korn

WACO-The program is called Just in Time Online Tutor, a pilot program that allows students to get help online in all core subjects.

"I think it's a very good program. It helps out a lot in school and helps me get through my classes and everything," said Josh Wilson.

A personal tutor, 24 hours a day and seven days a week. Only 34 schools in Texas were chosen for the Texas Education Agency and Region 20's pilot program. Midway High School and West High School are two of those 34.

"The thing that really sets this one a part is that you really get to take whatever problem you're dealing with and ask a live human on the other end. What's a better way to try and solve the problem," said Chris Allen, Principal for Midway High School.

"They're anonymous to that person. And sometimes you'll ask more in depth questions to a computer even though you're talking to a live person," said Diane Wilson, Intervention Specialist for West High School.

But who are the tutors on the other end?

"They take those teachers and put them through the same screening, the same background check, and the same level of scrutiny that a teacher that's typically hired at public schools in Texas would have to go through. They've fingerprinted, the whole nine yards," said Allen.

"I think for them it's a fun way to learn," said Wilson.

Both schools said they have the pilot program until the beginning of next school year. They also mention that it's too early to tell whether the district will have to pay for the program in the future or from state funding.



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