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## Franklin students getting organized

**Photos**



*contributed photo*  
Franklin sixth-grader Elizabeth Fabian holds her new organizing system.

By Staff reports  
GHS

Posted Sep 24, 2008 @ 01:34 AM

FRANKLIN — It was November 2007 when Horace Mann Middle School Principal Anne Bergen was looking for a new unified approach to organizing the academic paper portfolios of her 530 sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade students and the school's team of 40 teachers and administrators.

"Carrying big bulky binders was not the answer I was looking for, and with the demands for tracking student portfolios along with the pressure from impending cuts that would increase class ratios and teaching burdens, I was intent on finding the right tools for this challenge," Bergen said. "Kids who are disorganized are disorganized as adults."

Meanwhile Productive Education LLC of Framingham was reaching out to superintendents across Massachusetts to tell them about its new Organize360 system using Document Organizing Assistant binders, or DocOA, pronounced "Doc Away." It is a three-ring binder-organizing tool for handling school papers.

The company had developed the binder over the last decade through sales and in private schools.

The binders are said to yield improved classroom operations, improved educational outcomes and increased parental satisfaction. The binders are now tuned for use directly in schools, and teachers and students learn how to use it in one classroom workshop.

Bergen broached the idea of using the new binder with a series of meetings with her teacher evaluation team and the president of her Parent Communication Council, Maureen Roy. The 40 teachers who were trained on it last spring gave positive feedback. Bergen asked the parent council to give their evaluation and consider funding the

project.

"Our role is to assist the principal in any way, shape or form that could improve the educational process in our community school. DocOA and Organize360 presented ... just such an opportunity," Roy said.

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By August, all parents had been apprised of the school's plan to proceed with the binder. Instead of purchasing school supplies in stores, they were asked to put their supply money toward the purchase of DocOA. Horace Mann's 500 students began school Aug. 26, ready to receive their DocOA binder organizing system and instruction in "organizing literacy."

The system (previously known as Binder Buddies and the David Organizing Assistant) includes six color-coded nested pocket sets, which support two-level color-coding, two-column note taking, homework recording and tracking.

The system is joined by lightweight book rings with a unique locking system that reduce the cost and weight of the binder portion of the system by 80 percent of traditional bulky zipper binders. The DocOA has a complete archiving system so it can be streamlined week to week. It is delivered as a kit teachers and students build and own.

The project was introduced with a two-minute cartoon that tells students how the system works.

Parents got the archiving system on Parents' Night, when they visited the school to meet their children's teachers and the school's administrative team.

"I have a disorganized son who's spent lots of time looking for things right under his nose," said Renee Morris of her sixth-grader. "Now this year, when his friends call and ask about homework issues, he's got it right there. We're not running back to school to look for things he forgot to bring home."

Jill Klingenstein, mother of an eighth-grader, said, "I like the difference in types of pockets and the colors. My son knows what homework is done and what isn't. In the big binder, everything got lost."

"It's easy for him to understand and carry around," said Susanne Lyra of her eighth-grader.

Mark Brady, a special needs teacher, said, "I use it as if I'm a student. As they get their homework, I file my papers in the same way. I have twins in the seventh grade, and they like it, too."

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