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## 21st CENTURY GRANT AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM IN TWO MINGO COUNTY SCHOOLS

RESA 2 is proud to announce the opening of two 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) in Mingo County on January 13, 2014. Project YEP (Youth Education Program) is located at Gilbert Middle School and Williamson PK8 School in Mingo County. As we all know, these winter months have been quite the challenge with snow, ice, and freezing temperatures forcing us to close several days since that opening. However, we are excited that we are up and running, and we wish to thank our students and parents who have been a part of this new venture. Students come to the centers Monday through Thursday from 3:45 to 6:00 pm, and they receive supper, homework help, tutoring, math and reading instruction from highly qualified, certified teachers. They also have enrichment activities during the second hour of each day.

Two examples of enrichment activities follow: One day each week at each YEP Center, students work with RESA 2's STEM Coordinator, Dr. Richard Duncan, on two different robotics projects. The first makes use of the Hummingbird robotics kit from Bird Brain Technologies. We



*Dr. Duncan instructs students on robotics projects.*

used 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC funds to purchase the same kits used in the Arts + Bots projects that are part of a multi-institution National Science Foundation grant featuring partners that include Mingo County, Marshall, West Liberty, Allegheny Valley School District in Pennsylvania, TERC, and the lead partner, Carnegie Mellon. In these projects, students build a stationary robot using basic craft supplies - glue, construction paper, etc. - and common household trash - tissue boxes, water bottles, etc. They then use a visual programming interface to control the Hummingbird's LEDs, motors, servos, and sensors. These projects are often open-ended, and can help students bridge the gap between creativity and STEM-related disciplines. The second type of project uses Lego's Mindstorms EV3 kits. Students build a pre-defined robot, with their own additions if they wish, and will guide the robots to perform simple tasks - following a path, picking up a small object, moving an object from one end of the course to another, etc. The work mirrors Ro-

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botics' FIRST Lego League competitions, and may lead to students participating in FLL teams in the near future. It is great fun to observe the students working as a team during this enrichment activity, and the students look forward to the day Dr. Duncan comes for enrichment.

One of the major themes of the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC YEP Centers is health and wellness. RESA 2's Regional School Wellness Specialist, Mr. Keith Dalton, has coordinated continuing wellness activities at Gilbert Middle School around this theme. In one example of this work, students were asked to create a food diary of everything they ate for one day. The iPad lab, purchased by the grant, was then used to research nutritional facts on their food choices using an app called Calorie Counter by Fat Secret. Once the students totaled the number of calories and fat calories, they used an online basal metabolic rate calculator at <http://www.myfitnesspal.com/tools/bmr-calculator> to determine the average number of calories burned each day. This lesson helped them understand how many calories they were ingesting versus how many calories they actually needed to maintain their current weight. They discussed these results and reflected upon how having these data might impact food and snack choices in the future.



*Students enjoy gardening at Williamson Pk-8.*

We invite parents and students to consider becoming a part of this exciting new venture. If you would like to enroll or have questions, please contact Dr. Sandra Angius, 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Director, at 304/989-5300 or via email, [sangius@access.k12.wv.us](mailto:sangius@access.k12.wv.us).

## YOUTH EDUCATION PROGRAM AT GILBERT MIDDLE SCHOOL

By Roxanna Gibson, grade 6

Imagine a place where you finish all your homework PLUS get in some educational and fun activities. This is exactly what happens at the after school program at Gilbert Middle School. The Youth Education Program happens Monday-Thursday from 4:00-6:00 at GMS and is super fun!

The day begins with academics. We have the opportunity to either do our homework or get tutoring in math or reading. Some of the programs we use are Carnegie and Acuity for math, and Read 180, where we read books and practice reading skills. I really like Read 180 the best because I love to read, spell, and learn new things! After academics, we have our nutritious and delicious supper prepared by school cooks.



*Students participate in iPad training.*

The next part of the day is enrichments, which are very fun and cool activities we do for the last hour. We do all sorts of things like robotics, iPad lessons, listening to guest speakers, and physical fitness where we go into the gymnasium and learn fun and educational games. Robotics is great because we get to play with technology and progressively learn how to make a moving robot. On the iPads, we work with educational games and sights and do creative writing. We are even doing our very own blogs! When guest speakers come and talk, we learn about having a drug free lifestyle, character words, and a variety of life changing lessons and tips. My favorite part of enrichment so far has been the physical activities because I love to get up, move, and play! All in all, we learn how to be smart and still have fun.

YEP has helped me in math, reading, spelling, writing skills, and even important life situations. The advice I would give to other students is to join! It will help you magnificently in your school work and is really fun!



*Students participate in health and wellness activities.*

## REGIONAL SOCIAL STUDIES FAIR

RESA 2 was pleased to sponsor the annual Regional Social Studies Fair again this year. The event was held at the Big Sandy Superstore Arena in Huntington and consisted of 88 projects created by students from Cabell, Mason, Mingo and Wayne Counties. This was the first year Wayne County students participated. The high school students did National History Day Projects, a new formation which will move to middle school next year.

*"The quality and depth of research done by the students was astounding. They get better and better each year,"* stated Lenora Richardson, Director, Cabell County Schools.

Regional winners advanced to the West Virginia Social Studies Fair held in Charleston. Region 2 winners at the state event include:

Cabell County-Asadulla Ranavaya, Rachael Elkins/Ella Curtis,

Jonah Huntz/ Eli Huntz, Ema Taylor/Taylor Davis, Joseph Garret Snyder/Shamil Patel/Hogan Carter, Jalen Nicely

Mason County-Keenan Janicker, Taylor Tatterson/Carlee Sang/Monica Cook, San Robertson/Wesley Grimes, Caroline Foreman, Ryan Davis, Mattie Ohlinger, Kate Kenderson/Ashlea Woomer

Mingo County-Madison Ratliff, Ragan Macum/Braxton Hatfield, Brandi Harrison/April Schwalb/Austin Poers/Maria Ramey, Cameron Harrison, Andy Billips/P.J. Billips

Wayne County-Katie Copley/Sarah Dillon, Abby Lewis/Ella Edwards, Kelsey Adkins/Hannah Hysell/Amber Justice/Telissa Stroud, Nick Adams/Tre Maynard/Nicholas Radcliffe/Parker Runyon.



*Fair exhibit*



*Guests admire fair exhibits.*



## REGIONAL MATH FIELD DAY

The Regional Math Field Day was held this year at the Big Sandy Superstore Arena in Huntington. The event was sponsored by the Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) 2 and the county school systems of Cabell, Lincoln, Logan, Mason, Mingo, and Wayne.

The event includes students in grades 4-12 with each of the six counties of RESA 2 sending three students to represent their county in each grade level 4-9 and ten students for the 10-12 competitions.



*Students, parents and teachers attend Regional Math Field Day.*

The day included activities for grades 4-9 which were challenging and fun. The activities for the students in grades 10-12 were patterned after those used in The American Regions Mathematics League (ARML). All the activities for both groups were selected according to the basic philosophy that "mathematics is truly an exciting and challenging field of study."

The events in grades 4-9 included a written test, mental math activities, relays, and estimation activities, which are both computational and physical in nature. The grade 10-12 competition included an exam and short answer questions, which are individual events. Each county team also competed in relays and team questions.



*Students prepare to begin testing.*

First, second and third place winners advanced to the State Mathematics Field Day at Bethany College. Regional winners included: 4th Grade-Maggie Piaskowski, Carson Kirk, Grant Mullins; 5th Grade-Hannah Thompson, Christopher Smith, Kevin Gertz; 6th Grade-Armaan Karimpour, Peter Burbery, Lauren Hines; 7th Grade-Nick Adkins, Michael Huddy, Sydnie Adkins; 8th Grade-Bryce Tayengco, Carter Newman, Gabriel Burgess; 9th Grade-Joshua Eastman, Jessica Crislip, Jacob Cumm. High School team includes: Isiah Meadows, Michael Lovejoy, Zach Stevens, Genna Liu, Austyn Long, Shirley Ma, Sravya Pidarthi, Chase Parsons, Lasya Pidarthi, Charlie Newfeld.

## ADVANTAGE VALLEY WEST EDGE CONSORTIUM

The Advantage Valley West EDGE Consortium is unique in its membership spanning two states and incorporating Mountwest Community and Technical College, RESA 2 and five county school systems. The member counties of the consortium include Cabell, Mason, Putnam and Wayne in West Virginia and Collins Career Center in Lawrence County, Ohio.

The consortium's mission is very simple: to increase the college matriculation rate of graduates by utilizing EDGE credits while still in high school, among other recruitment activities with high school counselors, parents and community groups.

The career and technical education administrators and the MCTC division chairpersons and faculty have worked together with the EDGE coordinator in the revision of the "College Pathways" programmatic sheets. Together, they have increased the program offerings at MCTC from 16 to 31 College Pathways options for high school students to consider. Each of the majors carries EDGE credit from 3 hours to 36 hours depending upon the major. In 2013, more than 8,000 college credits were awarded to students.

This year the consortium has conducted two major activities aimed at assisting the high school CTE students in making sound career decisions.

During the fall semester, MCTC sponsored campus tours for more than 400 hundred high school CTE students from the counties. Each student was asked to select a program of interest for their visit.

After a short introduction, the students met in small groups with MCTC instructors in their programmatic area, such as business or allied health. The instructors reviewed the program and answered questions from admissions to curriculum requirements including the EDGE credits earned in high school.

Our second event was held Feb. 25, at Big Sandy Superstore Arena. Bill Rosenberger, the communications coordinator for Wayne County Schools, organized the first regional Career and Technical Education Expo.



*Regional Career & Technical Education Expo*

Approximately 700 students from Wayne, Cabell, Mason, Lincoln and Lawrence (Ohio) counties attended the CTE Expo. There were about 70 tables filled with representatives from higher education, union trades, employers, community organizations and job assistance programs.

"The best way to sum up the day was engagement," Rosenberger stated. "Students and employers were engaged with one another and I really think connec-

## EDGE CONSORTIUM (continued)

tions were made that wouldn't have been at a school-based career fair."

Vendors and students have been filling out online surveys about their experience, with overwhelmingly supportive results. He also has received inquiries from other counties in West Virginia about hosting similar events.

Some members of the consortium have already committed to be a part of a committee to help organize the 2015 event.

Consortium meetings are held monthly on the third Thursday throughout the school year. For more information on the Advantage Valley West EDGE Consortium, please contact Coordinator Bob McClain at 304-360-0410 or by email at [mclain13@mctc.edu](mailto:mclain13@mctc.edu)

## MAN ELEMENTARY: WALK ACROSS WEST VIRGINIA

Man Elementary kicked off its "Walk Across West Virginia" on March 18, setting its students on the path to better physical fitness.

The project, funded by a grant from the Highmark Foundation, uses pedometers – devices that measure the number of steps taken and distance traveled – to help students in the third and fourth grades track their physical activity and how much distance has been traveled. They then log their results. Students walk during gym, recess, or in the mornings.

"The kids really like the pedometers," Principal Linda Burgess said. "Having them, and the ability to use them, has made them more interested in walking and checking their progress."

Christie Conley, physical education teacher, said the school took a unique approach to walking across the state.

"We calculated the steps it would take from our starting point, Man, to different places in the state, such as Charleston, Wheeling, and Beckley," Conley said. "So far, we have walked from Man to Beckley and then to Lewisburg."

Cortlyn Dean, a third grader at Man Elementary, said she has definitely increased her physical activity since Walk Across West Virginia began last month.



Cortlyn Dean

"I've walked a lot more than I usually do. It's been fun, and we get to go outside more," she said.

The students have walked 107.7 miles so far. The school incorporates interesting facts and history into each stop along the way to integrate geography and West Virginia history into

physical activity.

"Our next stop is Elkins, WV, adding another 119 miles to our trek," Conley said.

The staff is using the grant to pay for positive behavior support items as well. The student who walks the most distance will win a \$10 iTunes gift card.

## CABELL COUNTY STUDENT SELECTED AS WV TOP HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH VOLUNTEER

By Kelly Daniels, CMHS Principal

Cabell Midland Senior, Katie Cowie of Milton, has been selected as West Virginia's top High School youth volunteer in the 2014 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program. The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards is a nationwide program honoring young people for outstanding acts of volunteerism.

Katie was nominated for this award by Cabell



Katie Cowie

Midland High School. She has raised money for a variety of causes by making and selling "tie-knot" blankets through a nonprofit organization she created. Katie's project grew out of a church retreat that focused on making a difference. "It was here I realized I was focusing too much on myself and not enough on others," Katie said. During this retreat, the group discussed many ways

people could volunteer, but none of the ideas appealed to Katie.

When Katie returned home, she did some brainstorming and decided to make blankets to sell. Her nonprofit, "Blossom" was born. With \$100 of her own money, Katie filed the necessary paperwork for nonprofit status, purchased fabric and went to work on her first blanket. Her blanket sales have enabled her to support causes including providing shelter for homeless families and helping women quit prostitution. When Katie was in 11th grade, she went to a local Laundromat one Saturday a month to pay for customers' laundry. Katie has also organized a "hat day" for the elementary schools in her county to raise funds for the American Cancer Society. "Spending time on other people instead of myself is better than anything I could have experienced in high school," said Katie.

As a state honoree, Katie will receive a \$1,000 award, and engraved silver medallion and an all-expense paid trip to Washington, DC in early May where she will join the top two honorees from each of the other states and the District of Columbia for four days of national recognition events. During this trip, 10 students will be named America's top youth volunteers of 2014.



Prudential Spirit of Community Award Medallion

Cabell Midland High School is proud of Katie and all of her accomplishments and wishes her well in the National recognition event!



## STABILITY BALLS USED IN CLASSROOMS

Man Middle School began changing classroom norms on a test basis this semester by replacing the chairs in selected classrooms with – large balls.

Technically, they have replaced the chairs with stability balls like the kind gaining popularity in exercises classes across the country. They are typically used for yoga and stretching, and come in different sizes to allow for them to be customized to account for different body types and developmental age groups.

These tools, which most people would likely associate with the school gym and P.E. class, are now being used in a classroom setting to help stimulate learning. Stability ball classroom chairs provide benefits ranging from quieter classrooms to more attentive students.

When students sit on stability balls, both sides of their brains are engaged in keeping their bodies centered on the balls.

And when the brain is stimulated,

it's more focused on learning. Not only is the brain better suited to processing new information, young minds are also better able to concentrate on exams, note-taking, class discussions, and other aspects of classroom learning.

A study published in the October 2003 issue of the *American Journal of Occupational Therapy* found that students with attention challenges, such as attention deficit hyperactive disorder, tended to focus better when using stability balls instead of chairs. The study revealed that students behaved better and that language skills improved, and that students and teachers preferred the use of stability balls in the classroom instead of chairs. Fidgeting helps children with ADHD concentrate, and just a little movement on the stability balls can meet their demands for expelling excess energy.

Nationally, teachers who swapped out traditional chairs for stability noticed a positive change in posture, enthusiasm for reading and other desk work and paying attention in general, according to a 2010 article in *Education World*. These improvements have been noted at Man Middle School as well.

*"The kids love them. They work especially well for the kids that have issues staying seated,"* Scott Adkins, a science teacher at the school, said.

The balls were obtained through RESA 2 through funding provided by the West Virginia Department of Education and West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources via a federal Community Transformation Grant.



*Students in Mr. Adkins science class use stability balls as chairs.*

## QUALITY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development is an essential component in student achievement. Through professional development opportunities educators learn new about new ideas, strategies, and ways to impact the students in their classroom and school. Quality professional development must address the needs of the teacher, the administration and ultimately, the students. Therefore, the development of professional development sessions which will fulfil these needs can be daunting.

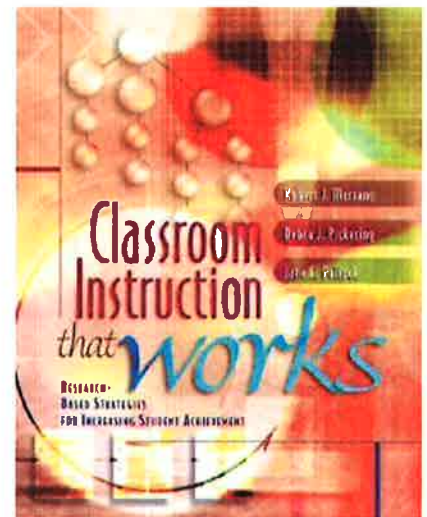
The Curriculum Directors of Cabell, Lincoln, Logan, Mason, Mingo and Wayne counties along with RESA 2 staff members meet on a regular basis to discuss and investigate professional development opportunities and curricular programs to meet the needs of the students of the region. Additional members include representatives of higher education and the West Virginia Department of Education. The RESA 2 Professional Development Consortium is a place for individual counties to share what is happening with professional development in their counties and to seek assistance in looking at future needs and programs.

When the needs of all counties in the region are similar, a RESA-wide training is discussed. If it is determined that such a training would be beneficial to all, plans are made to bring the training to all identified stakeholders.

County Curriculum Directors recently presented a need for addressing the poverty connection to student achievement. As a result, Eric Jensen will be presenting to the region in October a session on "Teaching and Engaging Students with Poverty in Mind". The identified county participants will then share the knowledge gained with their individual schools.

RESA 2 is also available to assist individual counties and schools with professional development to meet specific needs. Lynn Davis, Coordinator of Curriculum and Instruction, and Kristi James, Special Education Director, have been conducting *Classroom Instruction That Works* sessions in multiple counties in response to needs. Additionally, site-based sessions have been provided on text-mapping, co-teaching, and writing. These sessions are a direct result of professional development need requests.

Additional professional learning has been designed to support Focus Schools with organizational culture, leadership teams, and professional learning teams.



## RESA 2 APPLIES FOR GRANTS TO MEET COUNTY NEEDS

RESA 2 is working to meet the needs of the region and has worked with area curriculum specialists and special education directors to determine a path for support. Two projects were developed for submission as an i3 grant pre-application. It is unknown if these projects will make it to the next round but the collaboration around needs and outcomes was an important focused assessment of needs of student in mathematics as well as the career and postsecondary outcomes for special education students.

The first project constructed focuses upon mathematics. This grant submission is a pre-application project impacting 6<sup>th</sup> grade students in four counties. **Beyond the Math** is a new educational approach that changes the way of thinking and the underlying outlooks of students and their teachers, and establishes an original model for academic and personal achievement among struggling students.

Description: *Beyond the Math* is a cohesive teaching and learning strategy to increase student achievement. Activities include changing the growth mindsets for teachers, students, and school leaders; teaching math content that strategically reinforces key concepts to move students into firm understanding; and creating community resource libraries to involve parents, businesses, and community stakeholders in the change model.

Outcomes: (1) Students will show a 15% increase in math test scores from 6<sup>th</sup> grade to 8<sup>th</sup> grade; (2) By the end of 8<sup>th</sup> grade, 15% of the 6<sup>th</sup>-graders who received instruction with mindset-embedded mathematics curriculum will be proficient at grade level in math; (3) equitable access to qualified math teachers will be achieved in participating schools; (4) 54 district-wide PD/coaching sessions will increase teachers' effectiveness in teaching math; and (5) principals will engage in monthly PD to sustain a positive learning environment.

Target students: 396 students in 6<sup>th</sup> grade in participating schools are below proficiency in mathematics, in nine schools in four districts, and they will be followed through 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

Special features: For the first time, growth mindset is woven into content and teaching strategies designed specifically to give students the ability to persevere in math.

The second project entitled **Special Education Personal Support Model (SEPS)** provides a "healing pathway" to high-school graduation for a population with high dropout rates and challenges with career and college readiness.

With the SEPS model, academic outcomes will improve by: (1) providing students with both RESA 2's own counselors and online personal counselors to build resilience; (2) engaging these students in leadership programming; (3) helping students become career and college ready to the best of their abilities; and (4) introducing business mentors for career awareness-building activities. A holistic view of special education pro-

grams underlies the SEPS model. We do not merely give voice to a whole child approach; we model its success by turning to asset growth rather than deficit adjustments.

Outcomes include: (1) increased ability to adjust to challenges in their lives; (2) increased academic achievement; (3) increased understanding of careers available to them and the training and education required, i.e., career and college readiness; (4) decreased achievement gaps; and (5) increased graduate rates. A total of 565 students in special education programs in seven middle and high schools will participate in the project.

Special feature: Career and college readiness is an integral part of education now, and unless we want the achievement gap to continue to grow, we must create special programs for this special population.

## OTHER EVENTS



RESA 2 participates on the Association of Educational Service Agencies National Council to craft educational support for service agency work throughout the country.



Superintendents and finance staff working on Affordable Care solutions.