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**For Immediate Release**  
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## **New After School Programs Launch in Gilbert, Williamson**

**HUNTINGTON** – Two Mingo County schools have launched new after school programs thanks to a grant secured by RESA 2.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Program grant supports the creation of community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours. Additionally, the program helps students meet state standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and math, while offering a broad assortment of enrichment activities that complement their regular academic programs.

The Mingo County effort, called the Youth Education Program (YEP), is open to fifth through eighth grade students at Gilbert Middle School and Williamson Pre-K-8 School from Monday to Thursday every week until 6 p.m. The schools offer an academic component that includes homework help and curriculum enhancement programs for math and English. An iPad lab is available at each site for student use, and all instruction is provided by licensed teachers.

In addition, an enrichment component focuses on extended learning opportunities in topics such as robotics, art, and photography. A physical activity component is included as well. Volunteers, teachers and partnering agencies deliver these enhanced learning opportunities.

## MORE

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Page 2 of 2

All students begin the after school program with a healthy snack that meets West Virginia Office of Child Nutrition guidelines; snacks are prepared by school cooks employed through the program.

21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) have a proven track record in promoting positive academic performance and behavior:

- Annual performance report data from 21st CCLC grantees across the country demonstrate that regular attendees improve their reading (43 percent) and math grades (49 percent). (Learning Point Associates, 2007)
- Teachers reported that over three quarters of regular 21st CCLC program participants showed improvement in homework completion and class participation, while 72 percent of regular participants showed improvements in student behavior. (Learning Point Associates, 2009)
- 21st CCLC funding has been a major factor in helping to close the socioeconomic gap in afterschool participation. While afterschool participation rates have increased at every level of family income nationwide, lowest income youth have shown the greatest increase in participation. (Harvard Family Research Project, 2006)
- Students who attend 21st CCLC programs more regularly are more likely to improve their grades, test scores and overall academic behavior. More mature 21st CCLC programs have greater rates of regular attendance and therefore are more effective in improving students' academic behavior. (Learning Point Associates, 2007)

Plans call for increasing community and parent involvement by creating an advisory board for each center and hosting evening events open to the public, including open houses, technology demonstrations, and other programming. The goal is to make each center a community resource to augment what is already in place.

For more information, please contact Gilbert Middle School at (304) 664-8197 or Williamson Pre-K-8 School at (304) 235-2520.

RESA 2 is a full service educational agency that provides technical assistance and professional development services to six West Virginia county Board of Education.

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