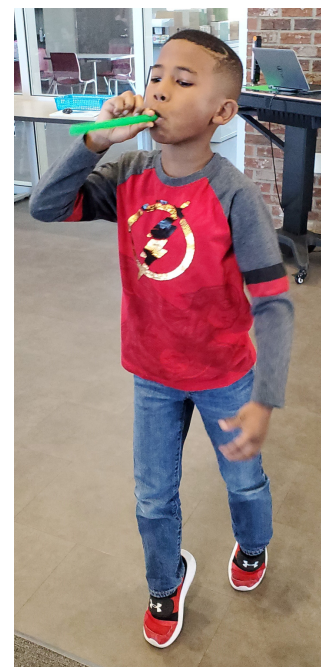


CORRIDOR CONNECTIONS

*The Official Newsletter of SCILS
STEM Collective for Innovative Louisiana Stakeholders*

Cathi Cox-Boniol, Interim SCILS Director
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As 2022 rolled in, the Lincoln Parish STEM Center hosted a STEM Day for the children of district teachers on the first professional development day of the new year. With volunteer instructors and students within the UTeach Tech program from Louisiana Tech University and community, the day featured opportunities for students to engage in a "Ship a Chip" engineering design activity, "Monday Blues" coding exercise, "Straw Rockets" experience, "Paper Circuits" and more.



Take a Look Inside

**GRADS CHOOSING TRADE SCHOOL
MEET DR. DONNA JOHNSON
STEMINIST FEST 2021
LASTEM SUMMIT PRESENTATIONS**

Dr. Lindsey B. Keith-Vincent Named to LaSTEM Council

Louisiana Tech University Leader Brings Expertise in Partnerships to the LaSTEM Effort



Dr. Lindsey Keith-Vincent, Associate Dean of Research, Outreach, and Innovation in the College of Education at Louisiana Tech University, has been named to the LaSTEM Council and begins her tenure with the upcoming January meeting. Keith-Vincent leads the Science and Technology Education Center (SciTEC) at Tech, where she has the opportunity to collaborate with academic, community, and corporate colleagues across the nation to develop and support STEAM-focused initiatives in the PK-20 arena. In addition, she has co-labored with colleagues and helped facilitate recent partnerships with international organizations including Discover Education and Coursera to bring world-class, flexible learning opportunities to Louisiana residents of all ages.

DID YOU KNOW?

Fewer High School Grads Going to College While Trade Schools are Becoming More Popular

Reported by Kenneth McGrath

A new Alabama study reveals most students who have graduated from the Mobile Public School System are not enrolled in a 2 or 4 year college.

The numbers from the Alabama Commission on Higher Education show that only 34% of high school graduates in Mobile between 2019 and 2020 moved on to higher education. In looking at numbers for Baldwin County, 53% of its students went to college between 2019 and 2020.

Many students are choosing to enroll in trade programs.

Akareem Spears, the Adult Education & GED Director at Bishop State Community College, reports trade programs give students the hands-on experience they need to get a job.

“We’re in a market now where every company, every corporation needs people and one of the things we want to do is give them qualified people,” said Spears.

According to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center students aren't going to college for a variety of reasons, including the pandemic and the financial burden a college education carries.



SCILS Advisory Board Spotlight

Dr. Donna Johnson
Louisiana Tech University

Dr. Donna Johnson currently serves as Deputy Chief Innovation Officer for Louisiana Tech University where she oversees the Louisiana Tech Academic Success Center in Bossier City, the Tech Barksdale Program, and the Tech Shreveport Center. Johnson was formerly the Executive Director of Caddo/Bossier Partnerships and Military Outreach for Northwestern State University. Through her career, Johnson has managed multiple university expansion and development initiatives, bolstered educational advancement in support of the DoD, and assumed teaching roles with Louisiana Tech, Northwestern State, Bossier Parish Community College, and Ashford University. Johnson has been active in service to the University and community through participation on various committees and work groups, including serving as President of Open Arms Adoptions, serving on the State Taskforce for Adult Learners, serving on the Louisiana Women in Higher Education (LAWHE) state steering committee, and serving on various committees with the Shreveport and Bossier Chambers of Commerce. Johnson holds a Bachelor of Science in Occupational Education from Wayland Baptist University, a Master of Education from Wayland Baptist University, a Master of Arts (English) from Northwestern State University, and a Doctor of Education from Louisiana Tech University.



Johnson





Region 8 LaSTEM Center Hosts Event for Middle Grades Girls



While the feminist movement captured the limelight more than half a century ago, young ladies today are finding a new advancement to rally around—STEM. In fact, they call themselves “steminists.”

In celebration of the myriad of meaningful and fulfilling careers for women within science, technology, engineering and mathematics, the Region 8 LaSTEM Center at Louisiana Tech University recently held its inaugural STEMInist Fest for female middle grades students throughout the area.

“We at SciTEC in the College of Education were thrilled to welcome remarkable young women to our campus for STEMInist Fest,” reports Dr. Lindsey Keith-Vincent, Associate Dean for Research, Outreach, and Innovation. “We are thankful for the leadership of our SCILS (STEM Collective for Innovative Louisiana Stakeholders) team and the many faculty and staff across campus that came together to make this possible for young learners we hope will become our future bulldogs and STEM leaders for Louisiana and beyond.”

The day included engagement with female university mentors during team building, a STEM challenge, an exploration of women in STEM careers, the creation and presentation of a 30-second PSA about women in STEM, a panel discussion with female STEM professors and a tour of innovative STEM spaces on the Tech campus. The experience allowed the girls to see themselves in a completely different way.

“A steminist is a girl who knows what she wants in her field and does not let anybody stop her or change her mind,” states Kensley Sutton, an A. E. Phillips Laboratory School 7th grader.

Made possible through support from the Louisiana Board of Regents and the National Girls Collaborative Project, the event was offered in partnership with the Louisiana Center for Afterschool Learning and Tech’s College of Applied and Natural Sciences. Dr. Jamie Newman, Associate Professor and Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies in Applied and Natural Sciences, indicates the event fulfilled its promise.

“I think it is clear from the comments shared by the girls who attended today’s event that meeting women in various areas of STEM is going to have a huge impact on their decisions going forward,” Newman shares. “This introduced these girls to what STEM really means, what disciplines and careers are possible, that there are other girls like them, and that there is a network to support them in achieving their goals.”

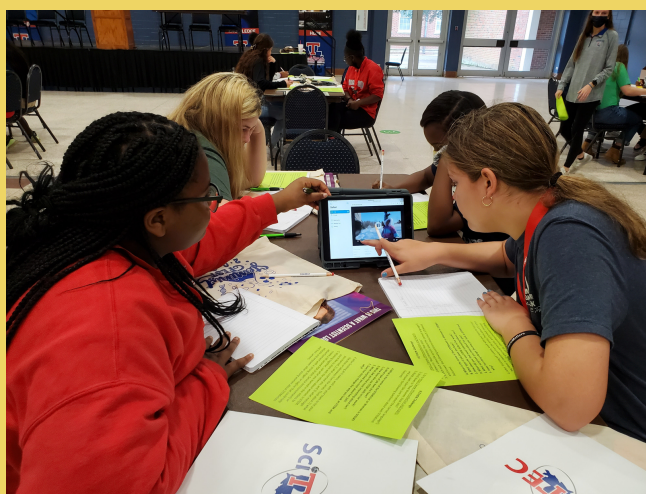
Watching the teams of young ladies struggle through the Barbie Bungee Challenge, Newman adds the looks of pride on their faces when their bungee worked and the reminder that they are not alone when they heard professors share their own stories of doubt and insecurity was a reminder that even small moments matter. For the young ladies in attendance, nothing could matter more.

“This STEMInist Fest has made me feel like I can do anything I want to,” adds Kenna Williams, a 7th grader from Cedar Creek School.

Other students noted how fun it was to learn about different careers while realizing they were capable of following any of the paths shared. Many found a greater appreciation for STEM and reveled in the reminder that they could do anything they put their mind to. Furthermore, there was the realization that life’s journey requires work and perseverance is essential. Even better, it’s all about growing from where you are.

“We are like flowers that bloom from our STEM,” expressed Kylin Harris, a 6th grader from A. E. Phillips Laboratory School while Naima Arnold, a Ruston Junior High School 8th grader noted “I love that it’s never too late to step into being a steminist.”

A Look at STEMinst Fest 2021



Region 8 Slates Presentations for the 2022 LaSTEM Summit

The SCILS team looks forward to the presentations from three of its stakeholders during the upcoming LaSTEM Summit. SCILS Advisory Board members Andrew Ganuchau (Louisiana Center for Afterschool Learning) and Dr. Anne Case Hanks (University of Louisiana at Monroe) will join Dr. Jamie Newman (Louisiana Tech University) in providing exciting breakout sessions. Topics will include the upcoming STEAMIFY competition, incorporating soft skills into the STEM disciplines to empower students for today's workforce and the interdisciplinary VISTA Program. Be watching for the Summit schedule and program for more details!



February 8, 2022
Raising Cane's
River Center
Baton Rouge, LA

Registration is now open for the 2022 LaSTEM Summit!

In addition, the landing page for the Call for Presenters and Vendors is complete. There are two ways to access it. 1) The hyperlink is available on the main landing page for the LaSTEM Summit Registration or 2) you can access the page directly here: <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/cu/CGsWN2g/LaSTEM>. Remember to register for the Summit--entering the Call for Presenters and Vendors doesn't register you!