

CORRIDOR CONNECTIONS

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

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SCILS Hands Out Free STEM Kits at the 72nd Louisiana Peach Festival

The SCILS Region 8 LaSTEM Center at Louisiana Tech University was on hand to distribute free STEM kits during the 2022 Peach Festival. Developed by the SCILS Director to compliment the annual festival, the kits focused around the beloved children's book "James and the Giant Peach" and featured a design activity that allows children to create the most effective zip line to get James down from the giant flying peach and help the insects on the ground. Kits included a copy of the book along with materials for the zip line experience and suggested instructions.



Take a Look Inside:

SCILS Partners with Little People Big Minds, Making a CASE for Middle Grades Project Wraps, Region 8 at the Teacher Leader Summit, SCILS Mini Summit

DID YOU KNOW?

Tiger Woods started playing golf at 2. Yo-Yo Ma started playing cello at 4. But Bill Gates? He didn't start coding until he was 13. Imagine the possibilities if Gates, like elite athletes and musicians, had the opportunity to learn computer science earlier in life.

TOP THREE REASONS WHY STUDENTS SHOULD LEARN COMPUTER SCIENCE BEFORE HIGH SCHOOL

1. IN A 21ST-CENTURY WORLD, STUDENTS BEGIN USING COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY AT A YOUNG AGE. THEY SHOULD BE EQUIPPED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS NEEDED TO UTILIZE THESE DEVICES RESPONSIBLY AND WITH GOOD CITIZENSHIP.

2. EARLY EXPOSURE TO COMPUTER SCIENCE PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES TO PRACTICE AND DEVELOP CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS.

3. STUDENTS WILL BE MORE PREPARED FOR SUCCESS IN THE WORLD OF WORK.



Region 8 LaSTEM Center Partners with The Learning Center on Wheels

Latoiya Jones with The Learning Center on Wheels recently partnered with the Region 8 LaSTEM Center to present "All About the Body STEM Fun," a workshop within its Little People Big Minds series. The free event was held at the Lincoln Parish Library's Community Room and welcomed students in grades k-2 and their parents for activities that included creating a play-dough model of the brain, learning to cast and wrap wounds, developing a model of the lungs, and building a blood model in a bottle. Jones also included colleagues from the Green Clinic Orthopedics to assist with the event and showcase health-related careers.

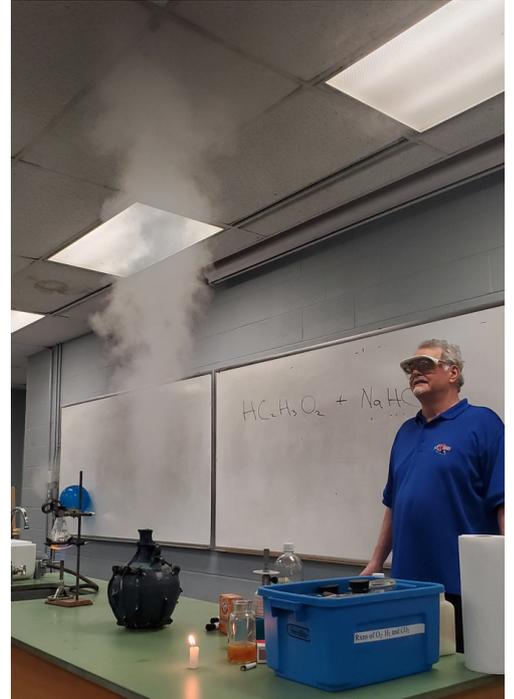


The Little Bodies Big Minds partnership will continue with a second workshop planned for June 18, 2022, at 10:00 AM in the Lincoln Parish Library Community Room.



Making a CASE (Collaborating Around STEM Engagement) for Middle Grades Concludes

Dr. Bill Deese, Professor in the Department of Chemistry at Louisiana Tech University, and the SCILS Region 8 LaSTEM Center recently wrapped up its “Making a CASE (Collaborating Around STEM Engagement) for Middle Grades” program as part of the EPSCoR (Louisiana Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research) program on the Tech campus. Students from Cedar Creek School and Choudrant High School engaged in a day filled with inquiry, demonstrations, interaction with STEM professionals and tours of innovative campus spaces that included the VISTA Center, Virtual Anatomy Lab and Integrated Engineering and Science Building.



Melissa Le Joins SCILS Director for Teacher Leader Summit

Melissa Le, reigning Miss Louisiana Volunteer Teen and Louisiana Middle Grades Student of the Year, was recently a featured speaker during the SCILS Region 8 LaSTEM Center Presentation for the Teacher Leader Summit held in New Orleans. Melissa joined Director Cathi Cox-Boniol in showcasing the Center’s “Girls in STEM” focus that includes its STEMinist Fest, SCILS STEM (Stand Together, Empower Many) Leaders initiative, and other partnership efforts that allow young female students to become equipped and empowered as strong candidates for opportunities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.



Region 8 LaSTEM Center Hosts 2nd Annual SCILS Mini Summit

Louisiana Tech University's Region 8 LaSTEM Center recently wrapped up its inaugural year with a Mini Summit held at the Davison Athletics Complex that celebrated its expanding network along the I-20 Corridor.

The Region 8 LaSTEM Center - SCILS (STEM Collective for Innovative Louisiana Stakeholders) for short - is a group of partners across north Louisiana focused on meeting the critical need for focused and enhanced experiences in science, technology, engineering and math that can elevate job skills needed for the workforce needs in our region. While tapped by Louisiana's Board of Regents to serve Union, Jackson, Ouachita, Morehouse, Richland, Franklin, West Carroll, Madison, Caldwell, East Carroll and Tensas parishes, the center has extended its reach to other partners strategically positioned to help strengthen its ongoing efforts.

In addition to a diverse gathering of area stakeholders, partnerships highlighted during the mini summit included post-secondary partners Bossier Parish Community College, Centenary College of Louisiana, Grambling State University, Louisiana Delta Community College and the University of Louisiana at Monroe as well as PreK-12 entities Downsville Community Charter School, Lincoln Parish STEM Center, Louisiana Tech University Early Childhood Education Center, Monroe City Schools, Morehouse Parish Schools, Ouachita Parish Schools, and West Carroll Parish Schools.

During the mini summit, attendees had the opportunity to preview project overviews from each partnership represented as they engaged in an interactive gallery walk. While providing feedback and asking questions, many also discovered further ways to get involved in the work taking place.

While the SCILS team will continue cultivating new partnerships in the upcoming year, new ones are already on the horizon. Jackson Parish Schools has already committed to joining the effort and had a team attend the mini summit to get a jumpstart on their work.

Dr. Lindsey Keith-Vincent, Associate Dean for Research, Outreach, and Innovation in the Louisiana Tech University College of Education, shared this thought while reflecting on year one of the LaSTEM effort: "The SCILS celebration reinforced how many individuals from so many diverse organizations are passionately committed to ensuring that STEM educational and workforce opportunities are available in our region. This level of investment from key stakeholders gives me hope that we will be able to keep our best and brightest here, and that they and their families will thrive in North Louisiana for years to come."

