May, 2021
North Central STEM Region
Monthly News

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Register today!
Virtual Family MATH Mashup

ISU Math Students are helping prevent the “summer slide” for this summer by providing virtual activities the whole family can explore. Beginning June 14, participating families will receive a weekly video link featuring a math activity that keeps young brains learning and engaged out of school.

“These videos are the perfect opportunity for families to spend quality time together and foster a love of math,” Kelly Bergman, STEM Manager for the North Central Iowa region of the Governor’s STEM Advisory Council, said.

Families can explore origami, the four-color theorem, knot geometry, and more at a time that is convenient for their busy summer schedules. The activities are recommended for ages 9 and up, but are adaptable for all ages.

Interested families should register by June 7 by visiting the North Central Iowa STEM-Hub webpage (www.ncstemhub.iastate.edu). This event is brought to you by the ISU Department of Mathematics and the North Central Region of the Iowa Governor’s STEM Advisory Council.
On April 29, over 90 attendees from business, education, state and local government gathered for the 22nd convening of the Iowa Governor’s STEM Advisory Council. Attendees had an option to attend in-person at the Iowa State University Student Innovation Center in Ames or virtually. The STEM Council’s new co-chair, Diane Young (pictured above), opened the meeting. Wendy Wintersteen, ISU President, also welcomed the attendees. The convening was filled with inspiring updates from STEM programs from across the state including the STEM Scale-Up Program, STEM BEST® Program, and Teacher Externships. Several STEM Council Working Groups also provided updates. Working Groups included: Equity and Inclusion Working Group, the Creativity and Innovation Committee and the Career Guidance Committee. To learn more about the event and the STEM Council programs, click HERE.

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STEM Scale-Up Program Strengthens Educators

The AGWSR Community School District is small, but the STEM Scale-Up Program helps makes its educators mighty. K-12 Media Specialist, Beth Janssen, says her participation in the program has been monumental to her abilities as an educator for the Iowa communities of Ackley, Geneva, Steamboat Rock, and Wellsburg.

“Receiving the [Scale-Up] Award completely changed the trajectory of my school library,” Janssen said. “I feel we could match our 1A school library offerings against any 4A library and be right on par”.

Janssen received her first Scale-Up Award in 2019. The award was for a specific program called “Making STEM Connections” provided by the Science Center of Iowa. With the award, Janssen was able to carve out space in the high school Library dedicated to “maker” materials including safety goggles, soldering irons, sewing machines, LEDs, hammer, drills, and programmable robots. Janssen began offering high school students STEM challenges that propelled their hands on learning of science, technology, engineering and math concepts.

“[The materials] enhance my students’ exposure to real-world scenarios, workplace expectations, and team mentality problem solving,” Janssen said.

Teachers have also been able to check out the materials from the library, and though it was slow in the beginning, Janssen said the trend is accelerating, as more staff become comfortable integrating STEM materials into their curriculum.

Janssen is getting more comfortable with STEM curriculum too, and the STEM Scale-Up
Program has been the key to accessing top-notch professional development. Through the STEM Scale-Up Program, Janssen was able to become a STEM Innovator certified leader by participating in a program offered by the University of Iowa. The STEM Innovator curriculum equips student with essential skills for STEM innovation and entrepreneurship.

“The STEM Innovator program has been an amazing experience,” Janssen said. She is a major proponent of project-based learning opportunities and said the program clarified her understanding of how to take student inquiry from question to possible solution.

While Janssen has had success in implementing STEM programming in her school district, she identifies time and money as two main barriers to its growth. The Scale-Up Program offers educators across Iowa access to materials and professional development when resources are limited. Students of all community sizes, 1A or 4A, can have a great education that prepares them for the future.

“I am so thankful for the Scale-Up Awards, and I will continue to apply for them,” Janssen said. “I believe 100% they are making a difference in the lives of Iowa’s students!”

Welcome Mary Olson to NC STEM Team

Mary Olson is excited to join the North Central STEM Hub as a Program Assistant. She has previously served Iowa 4-H as a member of the support staff team and has a background in Student Affairs, working for colleges in Georgia and Illinois. Mary grew up on a family farm in southwest Iowa, and now lives in State Center, Iowa, with her two children and husband. In her spare time, Mary enjoys writing letters to friends in other states and taking her family on big (or small) adventures outdoors. Feel free to reach out to Mary with questions around STEM Festivals and Resources, mols@iastate.edu.
Calendar of Events

June 14
Virtual Family Math Mashup Begins

August 17
NC STEM Region Advisory Board Meeting 12-1:30 PM

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