

Local Schools



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Foundation funds \$3.5K in teacher grants

JANUARY 01ST 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Poplar Bluff, Missouri - The Poplar Bluff School Foundation recently funded two 'innovative educational projects' valued at more than \$3,500 so students can collect data for NASA and participate in group activities using digital microscopes.

The foundation board unanimously approved the projects during a meeting held last month as part of the nonprofit's mini-grant program, which funds proposals based on merit above and beyond regular classroom budgets.

Board treasurer Emily Wolpers commented that Ashley DeBerry of the Middle School, the teacher over the NASA submission, went out of her way to receive a certification in Alabama over the summer; and new board member Bobbie Tinsley noted that 375 high school biology students would benefit from the microscopes.

DIGITAL MICROSCOPES

"Instead of using microscopes one at a time, it'll be a shared experience," PBHS science teacher Gretchen Pendley said upon receiving the device. "Students can have that 'aha moment' together."

Pendley's colleague, Karen Harris, added: "I'll be able to point and show the students exactly what to find in an individual slide, as they'll be able to look up at the projector and see what I'm seeing."

The model, made by Wolfe, interfaces with a computer and projects high-resolution images on an interactive whiteboard. The microscopes can additionally create time-lapse video screenshots, the proposal explains.

The team of educators, also including Stephanie Hillis, plan to use the digital microscopes in January when they begin teaching photosynthesis in biology class. Students will follow along with the instruction on regular compound microscopes already available in labs.

GLOBE CLASSROOM

NASA-grade meteorology equipment—including a rain gauge, barometer, hygrometer, infrared thermometer and pH test strips—will be used by Middle School students in DeBerry's fifth grade math and science classes come spring.

The GLOBE program will allow students to collect data for the region and enter it into the database to be made available to globe.gov visitors. "This is data that like," DeBerry stressed, "NASA uses.

"Southeast Missouri will contribute and produce maps so data can be seen worldwide to gauge rain, average highs and lows, cloud coverage, temperature rating," she continued.

DeBerry received her special training at the Marshall Space Center. Her principal, Dr. Brad Owings, noted that his favorite part about the new forged partnership with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration is that Poplar Bluff may be able to temporarily house a moon specimen under strict protocol. "We get to see moon rocks," Owings exclaimed.

Teacher Gretchen Pendley points to cells on an aquatic plant leaf during her freshman advisory on Friday, Dec. 14, while student Hannah Tipton looks into the digital microscope and classmate Summer Worley observes the projection.

Photos and article Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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