THE LEARNING LABORATORY

Welcome to the February edition of the Learning Laboratory,
a twice yearly joint effort between Horace Mann Lab School and Leet Center

Horace Mann Lab School and Leet Center are extensions of the Department of Professional Education in the Professional Education Unit. In this edition of The Learning Laboratory, you will find information on educational updates and collaborative efforts. There are several collaborative projects underway, and this newsletter does not mention all of them. We welcome the opportunity to partner and collaborate with all departments and organizations and research opportunities. Please contact Sandy Seipel (sseipel@nwmissouri.edu) or Cindy Scarbrough (cindysc@nwmissouri.edu) to discuss partnership/collaborative efforts.

Horace Mann Lab School has a current enrollment of 80 K-6 students with an average class size of 13 students. Our large, inviting classrooms provide a family atmosphere that embraces learning and exploration. Our focus on the whole child provides 90 minutes of shared studies each week that includes Art, P.E. and Music. Collaborative efforts with the Physical Education Department provide hands-on training to Physical Education majors and provide learning experiences that are only available at Horace Mann Lab School. Band instruction is provided for fifth and sixth grade students by two outstanding students in the music department.

Additional programs include Sign Language and Spanish, which are collaborative efforts with the English and Modern Language Department. Elementary education majors participate in two practicum experiences at Horace Mann: Reading/Language Arts and Content. These experiences provide instructional practice for university students and engaging, small group learning for Horace Mann students. Sign Language, Spanish, and Counseling are provided through practicum experiences. Several organizations use volunteer hours to provide valuable experiences for our students. Missouri Academy students provide Chess and Science activities for our after school Bearcat Club students.

In November and December, teams that included Horace Mann teachers and DPE instructors/professors visited Stephen F. Austin Charter School in Nacogdoches, Texas and Thomas Metcalf School in Normal, Illinois. These visits, made possible with Academic Initiative Grants from the Dean and Provost, allowed participants to see programs and collaboration of other lab schools. The school visits were the catalyst for continued communication on ways to collaborate for greater learning opportunities for all students and faculty. These visits yielded two major take aways: implementation of Readers Workshop, strengthen partnerships/collaborations to provide two way educational experiences for all students to utilize the outstanding opportunities available at NWMSU.
Horace Mann Lab School is implementing a research based balanced literacy approach to reading with the implementation of Readers/Writers Workshop. Using the works of McGregor, Calkins, Harvey, Miller, Oliver, Zimmerman, Hattie, and others, Horace Mann will provide a strong foundation for our students to develop a love of reading with necessary skills and strategies to be successful. Using multiple, research based sources provides a strong foundation for all students. Implementation is underway with full K-6 implementation for fall 2015.

**Project Lead the Way** is a collaborative effort with Missouri Project Lead the Way and the Regional Professional Development Center. Project Lead the Way (PLTW) is a science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) program to engage students at a young age to become critical thinkers and problem solvers. By using the engineering design process and applying knowledge and skills to take risks, make mistakes, and learn from mistakes, students are able to problem solve to create solutions.

Working with the Computer Science Department TECHNOLOGY NIGHT, offered on Tuesday, February 17 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. was a huge success. Students worked with Scribblers, Scratch, and Scratch Jr. A Career Technology Panel included Nate Blackford, vice president and chief operating officer at Northwest Medical Center in Albany, Mo., who discussed the importance of technology in business and health care; Lesley Martin, a business and computing teacher at Staley High School, talked about the benefits of Project Lead The Way; and Shea Zion, a freshman interactive digital media and computer science major at Northwest, discussed her experiences as a student. Debi Korell, RPDC, is providing training to Horace Mann teachers. Implementation in grades 2 and 4 will take place in March. All teachers will be fully trained to implement PLTW in fall 2015.

As Governor Jay Nixon stated in his State of the State Address on January 21, 2015:

"We’ve got to expose kids – at an early age – to programs that bring science and math to life ... like Project Lead the Way."
"But not enough schools are using Project Lead the Way at the elementary level. We need to ramp that up dramatically."

**Engineering for Kids**-Horace Mann Lab School’s summer program will be offered June 8 to July 2 from 7:45-11:45 a.m. Monday through Thursday with Aerospace Engineering, Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Environmental Engineering, Robotics, Literacy, Team Building, and Outdoor Exploration. First option to attend summer school will go to our Horace Mann students at no additional charge. An open enrollment period will take place for children in the community that would like to attend at a cost of $160 for the 16 day/4 day per week program. Engineering for Kids is offered for students in grades 1-5 (student grade in fall 2015). A kindergarten class will also be available for incoming kindergarten students. First option will go to Leet Center families at no additional cost. The kindergarten program will be offered in conjunction with Engineering for Kids. More information will be available on the Horace Mann and Leet Center websites in March.
Leet Center is currently serving 60 children and families in three mixed age classrooms. There are twenty children that range from 3-5 years old in each room supervised by a Lead Teacher, a Graduate Assistant and at least one Student Employee. Our classrooms implement an Emergent Curriculum Philosophy that is based on children’s current interests. Lead Teachers study the interests and trends of material usage to lead curriculum planning.

Beautiful sunlit rooms with a home-like environment foster the building of relationships in our preschool classrooms. Materials for young children are displayed in a functional yet inviting manner, which nurtures young children’s inner creativity. The importance of nature and outdoor exploration is celebrated in our outdoor classroom.

The Leet Center collaborates with the Music Department, Science Department, Health and PE Methods classes and many others to offer vast experiences for our youngest NWMSU learners. Our preschoolers have had gymnastics, dinosaur museum and digging experiences, instrument and music exposure, outdoor explorations and many field trips because of partnerships with the university.

Our lead teachers work in collaboration with the Early Childhood Program to provide practicum experience for Northwest students. Our preschool children benefit from the privilege of smaller ratios and advanced experience offered by students from the Professional College of Education. Leet Center faculty also serve as adjuncts and spend time offering their experiences and expertise to various Northwest classrooms.

At the Leet Center we are committed to our families and understand that play is serious work for children, we value and respect the uniqueness of each child and family. In the center we acknowledge that children and adults learn from each other so we promote strong relationships as the foundation of learning. We know that success in school is grounded in quality Early Childhood experiences and strive to offer them daily to children in our NAEYC Accredited program.

We will begin enrollment for the 2015-2016 school year in March and would invite you to apply online on our Leet Center website. We offer Full day, Half day and MWF preschool options. Children who are three by August 1, 2015 will be given first priority.

For more information:

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