





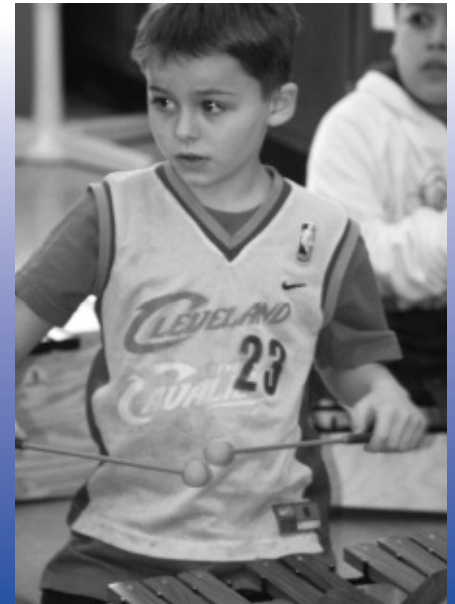


Bulletin

Highlighting Grants-To-Educators

The **Bulletin** highlights some of the many exceptional projects taking place in Ohio's secular schools via the Grants-to-Educators program in which teachers and administrators can apply for funds up to \$3,000 for classroom, school-wide, or district-wide projects. The program supports our mission to recognize and encourage outstanding classroom teachers and administrators in six key areas:

-  Mathematics, Science & Technology
-  Language Literacy
-  Arts Education
-  Educator Development
-  Leadership Skills for Administrators
-  Other Student Services



Students at Holden Elementary School in Kent play melodies on the xylophone they composed to coincide with the words from nursery rhymes and other pieces of children's literature.

Sounds of Literature



Children at Holden Elementary School in Kent are composing melodies on xylophones and glockenspiels* to coincide with the text of poetry, nursery rhymes, and children's literature.

"The over all plan is to apply literacy to musical improvisation," says Holly Linder, who teaches music to the school's 250 K-5 students. The students play, improvise, and create accompaniments and melodies using pitched percussion instruments purchased with a Grant-to-Educators from the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation.

Ms. Linder explains that the students first experimented with imitating patterns – such as do-re-mi – as they became familiar with playing the barred instruments. Then they began to create their own melodies using text from a poem or nursery rhyme.

* *Glockenspiels* are similar to xylophones, but where xylophone bars are wooden, glockenspiel bars are metal. They are much smaller instruments and higher in pitch.

For example: Kindergartners experimented with high/low pitches using nursery rhymes such as *Hickory, Dickory Dock*. As the "mouse went up the clock" the students played higher pitches on their instruments. They could actually see that a longer bar [on the xylophone or glockenspiel] is a lower pitch and a shorter bar is a higher pitch, explains Ms. Linder. "This gives them something tangible, something kinesthetic," she adds. "It's wonderful for younger kids because they can see it, they can feel it, they can manipulate, and explore it."

Students in grades K-5 experimented with and played the instruments in their bi-weekly music classes beginning in January. Ms. Linder designed the project to meet the Ohio Music Content Standards, which requires students to sing, play instruments, improvise, compose, read, and notate music. Before she had the instruments, she met these standards by focusing on body percussions, hand drums, and rhythm sticks.

Gifted Students Soar to New Heights



Seventh graders in the Aerospace Program test their flight plans on one of the school's flight simulators.



When Robert Remington decided to become a teacher, he had already had a successful career in the information technology field that spanned almost four decades. He had already been a certified commercial pilot and flight instructor who had taught many adults, including his own children, how to fly. He had already been a college instructor and an aerospace officer for the Civil Air Patrol. Mr. Remington believed he had a lot to offer young children and that conviction has certainly held true.

Five years ago Mr. Remington was hired as a teacher at Mt. Washington Elementary School in the Cincinnati City Schools. In an effort to fully utilize his background and skills, he suggested the school pilot an aeronautical science program for first and second graders as part of the science curriculum. His principal agreed and the school purchased one computer with flight simulator software to be used to teach the concepts in a hands-on fashion.

"I thought we could start an aerospace program that is modeled after a flight school," says Mr. Remington, who now is the full-time gifted teacher at Mt. Washington. "We could teach all the different aerospace components of flying, and with a flight simulator, I could actually give the kids hands-on experience." The simulators would also allow him to tie in other aspects of the science and mathematics curricula, such as concepts related to weather, flight plans, and geography.

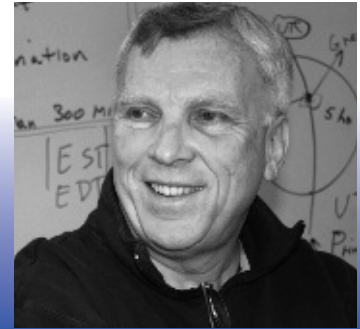
The results were outstanding. Simply put, he says, "The kids loved it."

In the past three years, that one simulator pilot project has soared to a new level. The Aerospace Program is now the means by which the school services its gifted population. With resources from the Jennings Foundation's Grants-to-Educators, the classroom where Mr. Remington teaches now holds 10 flight simulators that are used by all 57 children in the program.

Mr. Remington developed the pilot project into the school's gifted program to allow exceptional students to probe the relevance of STEM-related (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) content. Using a simulated, real world application, he says, the students are able to demonstrate deep levels of proficiency and understanding of the topics. The program differentiates Mt. Washington from other schools, he adds, and has attracted students who are searching for challenging educational opportunities that enable them to reach their potential.

Gifted students in grades 1-8 are pulled out of their regular classes to meet with Mr. Remington for 50 minutes twice a week. Each year he chooses a different theme for the Aerospace Program so that students have new learning experiences as they progress through school. He tailors the content to the different ages, but students in all grades study similar concepts.

"I teach the students like I would teach an adult—I address all the different areas that you would have to be knowledgeable about in order to fly," says Mr. Remington. "And they soak up everything; they are interested in anything you put in front of them."



Mr. Remington also fills his classes with lessons on the history of flight and space exploration, highlighting pioneering figures whose theories and inventions were instrumental to the field.

"We cover the standards in science, technology, and social studies," he explains. "What I try to do in the lessons – even though I'm talking about something contemporary in aerospace – is go back and talk about the people who made the discoveries that were necessary to put us where we are today."

The uniqueness of the class has attracted professionals from the community who assist with lessons and expose the students to careers associated with the aerospace industry. Mr. Remington also has taken the students to the National Air and Space Museum in Washington D.C.

He says the students like that the non-graded class follows an open structure, which allows them to ask questions, bring up interesting side points, and explore topics in as much detail as they want, something they don't often get to do in their other classes.

"I don't have to teach [a set curriculum]," he remarks. "If somebody brings up a very interesting idea, I can go with it. The goal isn't the academic content. Gifted kids pick up academic content like that. This [experience] is for the socialization – giving them self-confidence so they realize what they can achieve."

"I'm trying to open their eyes to the opportunities that are out there," he adds. "They need to set their sights high and find out what their gifts and strengths are. I want them to understand that they are different and that they are going to make a contribution to society someday."

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TO APPLY FOR A GRANT Application forms for the Grants-to-Educators program can be obtained from the Foundation's Web site, www.mhjf.org. **No other forms will be accepted.** To apply, please follow the procedures explained on the Web site. The Foundation's Distribution Committee reviews applications ten months a year (not in July or December). Applications must be submitted by the 20th of the preceding month to be considered. Action on requests is generally communicated within two months.

Blanket, Book, and Buddy



Thirty-five children at Akron Children's Hospital were given a special treat recently when they received a book and stuffed animal tightly wrapped in a cuddly fleece blanket. The comfort packages were put together by a group of high school and college students the young patients would never meet.

Designed by the Mount Union College Kappa Delta Pi Education Honor Society, the project is a way the students give back to their community. This year, 25 students in the new Maple Heights Teacher Academy participated in the project along with the college students and enjoyed the satisfaction of helping others.

"It's important to try and do new things outside of the regular classroom so kids get experience with something they haven't done before," says Melissa Jacot, who teaches 60 teens at Maple Heights High School who aspire to become teachers. (They are the first students to participate in the school's new Teacher Academy, a two-year vocational program designed for future teachers, which opened in the fall of 2008.)

During the past year, the Teacher Academy formed a partnership with Mount Union College to expose the high school students to college-age peers working toward an education degree. The older students serve as mentors to the younger ones, providing information about college life and motivating them to complete their high school diploma.

Mrs. Jacot saw a perfect opportunity to combine the two groups in the service learning project the older students had done in the past. She received a Grant-to-Educators from the Jennings Foundation to purchase material to make fleece blankets and stuffed animals and children's books to go along with them. Together, the high school and college students spent one day on the Mount Union campus sewing the blankets. While they worked, they talked about college life and what the younger students needed to do to prepare themselves for the experience.

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Maple Heights Teacher Academy students sew blankets for a service learning project in conjunction with education majors at Mount Union College.

Science and Lit



Second graders show off the slime they made while learning about the properties of polymers.



After attending the Jennings Summer Science Workshop, Mindy Newell was inspired to use children's literature to teach science.



"I personally love science and I learn best by doing, so this project was right up my alley," says Mrs. Newell, who teaches second grade at Union Elementary School in Upper Sandusky.

"I was also continually searching for materials and spending my own money on supplies to align with the Ohio State Standards, to help raise academic performance, and to promote the love of reading and science. This project allowed me to have all the supplies that I needed."

A typical "time-crunched" elementary teacher, Mrs. Newell also liked the idea of integrating reading and science, which she says allows her to cover both subjects simultaneously.

With a Grant-to-Educators from the Jennings Foundation, she purchased dozens of books (all had been recommended by Gene Easter at the Jennings Science Workshop) that addressed topics she wanted to cover in science. She also bought equipment and supplies needed to conduct hands-on experiments related to those topics.

"I picked topics that I love to learn about that also hit the standards," Mrs. Newell explains. She also consulted a variety of Web sites, such as stevenspanglerscience.com, that are wonderful resources for ready-to-go literacy units that coincide with a variety of science experiments.

Mrs. Newell organized her books and materials into monthly themes. Each month the class reads a different trade book in several ways: whole group, partner reading, and small group reading. Students answer comprehension questions aligned to the state standards, discuss science topics that pertain to the book, and perform a related experiment. For example: In August the student's read *Zack's Alligator* by Shirley Mozelle and James Watts. Then they experimented with polymers, learning "how thirsty polymers perform very important functions in everyday life," says Mrs. Newell. They "grew" alligator polymer toys for several weeks, observing, measuring, and recording the results.

In December, after reading Jacqueline Briggs' *Snowflake Bentley*, students worked in groups and used the scientific method to experiment with making the perfect batch of snow in a petri dish. And in February, they read Loreen Leedy's *Postcards from Pluto: A Tour of the Solar System*, discussed Newton's Laws of Motion, launched rocket balloons, and experimented with Diet Coke and Mentos!

"All of these experiments – they just make learning science concepts fun," says Mrs. Newell.

All three sections of second grade at Union will share the children's literature and science hands-on materials for years to come.

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Sounds

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Through the process, Ms. Linder also wants the students to learn social skills such as playing in an ensemble, watching a conductor, and listening to each other's musical improvisations. Ultimately, they will showcase their work in a school concert.

"I hope the students learn the joy of music making," says Ms. Linder, who has taught music in both public and private schools for 16 years. "They are getting to a place where they want to share their melodies, they want to share their tunes."

"They enjoy the self-empowerment, self-expression of playing their own music instead of imitating a known song," she adds. "I think they just enjoy the sounds that they are producing."

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Ms. Linder demonstrates how to improvise a melody on the xylophone for her second grade class.

Buddy

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"This was a great mentoring opportunity," explains Mrs. Jacot. "My students really liked being on the campus and talking with the college kids about what dorm life and classes are like."

Mrs. Jacot adds that many of her students in this inner ring Cleveland suburb will be the first in their families to attend college and have little knowledge of what it is all about.

Once the blankets were completed and the books and stuffed animals purchased, students from Mount Union delivered them to the hospital. The high school students were disappointed that hospital rules would not allow them to meet with the patients who received the gifts, but they still enjoyed knowing they brightened the children's lives.

"I think it's really important for students to get involved in a project that they can get excited about, finish, and really feel good about," remarks Mrs. Jacot.

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