THOMAS B. FORDHAM FOUNDATION
Advancing Educational Excellence

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Sponsorship
monthly

PHOENIX STUDENTS TAKE PRIZES AT ROBOTICS COMPETITION

Students from Phoenix Community Learning Center, one of six Fordham-sponsored charter schools, beat out students from eight other Cincinnati-area schools in a local robotics competition in late February.
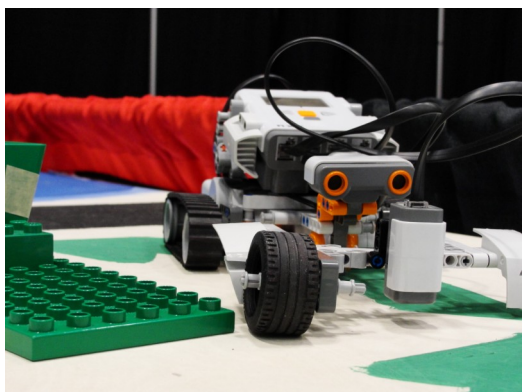
Phoenix's team included six students who worked for months on Buddy 2.0, a one-and-a-half pound Lego robot that stands on two feet and rolls like a tank. Buddy uses a sensor to detect colors, which represent different environmental hazards that he is designed to clean up.

Starting in November, two students worked to build and program the robot, while the others shared the responsibilities of building a floor for Buddy to roll on and writing a report on environmental hazards. Students stayed after school three days each week to work on their robot, but as February drew closer they started to spend every day after school working on the project.

In March, the students made an oral presentation of their report and let Buddy do his stuff for a six-judge panel at the competition, which was hosted by the College of Applied Sciences at the University of Cincinnati.

For their work, the students won three first-place trophies (Total Points-Winner, Best Robot, and Creativity) and two second place trophies (Research Display and Oral Presentation).

"I think that it didn't really hit home until we actually came back and could take a breath," said Mrs. Sushumna Means, a teacher who served as an advisor to the students on the project.

Ms. Jenna Amatull , a science teacher who also advised the students, indicated that the experience was valuable from more than just an academic perspective.

"They've said several times they were working with students they wouldn't typically interact with," Ms. Amatulli said. "They really came together as a team. We had an incident with a student who was having behavior issues in class. The team really rallied around him. The girls were crying by the end of it."

Since the competition, the students and their teachers attended an American Society for Quality dinner, and presented Buddy at Duke Energy's tech show on May 4.

CREDIT FLEX

Included among the provisions of Senate Bill 311, Ohio's core curriculum legislation, are requirements that the State Board of Education adopt a plan that "enables students to earn units of high school credit based on a demonstration of subject area competency, instead of or in combination with completing hours of classroom instruction." Schools are required to adopt a Credit Flexibility (credit-flex) provision by the start of the 2010-2011 school year.

Students may earn credits via the traditional path of completing coursework; demonstrating mastery of course content; or pursuing one or more "educational options." Options may include distance learning, educational travel, independent study, an internship, music, arts, sports, tutorial programs, and community engagement projects. The opportunity to earn this type of credit must be available in all content areas and for all students.

The awarding of credit for credit-flex work will be determined locally, by the district. Generally, students work with a teacher of record, who is HQT in the subject area in which credit will be rewarded, to establish a Credit Flexibility Plan. This signed agreement should cover several points, such as how academic credit will be rewarded, how progress will be assessed, and what staff, other partners, and family members should be involved in the process.

Credit flexibility is intended to motivate and increase student learning, allowing access to more learning resources, creating more individualized learning, and using multiple measures to demonstrate student learning. A number of tools and resources to guide your school in establishing its own credit flex guidelines are available from ODE here, and the State Board of Education checklist for local board policy requirements is here.

FAMILY CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Ohio's House Bill 1 contains a provision for Family Civic Engagement that needs to be implemented to work along with current state and federal policies and guidance. Community schools may follow the provision (but are not required to). The related policies and guidance include:

No Child Left Behind, Title I, Section 1118; Ohio Parent Engagement; and the State Board Parent and Family Involvement Policy.

As noted in ORC 3313.821, the board of education of each school district is to appoint a family and civic engagement team. Each team is charged with:

- Working along with local county Family and Children First Councils (FCFCs) to develop the job descriptions for school family and civic engagement coordinators;
- Developing five-year family and civic engagement plans;
- Providing annual progress reports on the development and implementation of the plan;
- Providing recommendations on matters that are board and school specific.

The local board will determine the membership and organization of its family and civic engagement team. The team is to include parents, community representatives, health and human service representatives, business representatives and any other representatives the board would like to include.

Important Deadline
Community Schools, who elect to participate and appoint a team, must complete the following by June 30:

- The board must appoint a family and civic engagement (FCE) team;
- The FCE team must develop and write a five-year FCE Plan;
- The board is to create a job description for an FCE coordinator;
- Submit the FCE plan to the county FCFC.

The annual progress report should be submitted to the county FCFC. ODE's Office of Family and Civic Engagement has made available multiple resources to guide your school through the creation and implementation of its own FCE team and plan; these resources are available here.

Andrew Boy, founder and co-director of the Columbus Collegiate Academy, was recently selected for *Columbus Business First's* "Forty Under 40," a highly selective award that recognizes young professionals who are not only outstanding at their jobs, but have also made a difference in their communities and/or in the lives of others.

Columbus Collegiate Academy has benefitted greatly from Andy's excellent work with his students, 94 percent of whom are economically disadvantaged. In a single year, Andy and his exceptional team of teachers moved their inaugural class of sixth graders from 35 percent proficient in reading and 41 percent proficient in math (as fifth graders) to 74 percent and 82 percent proficient in reading and math, respectively. These results helped the school earn an EPIC (Effective Practice Incentive Community) Award from New Leaders for New Schools earlier this year.

Andy's work at Columbus Collegiate earned him a spot in the 2010 "Forty Under 40." He was the only school leader represented; other professions included law, finance, public relations, medicine, government, and technology. Andy and his fellow honorees were honored at a dinner and awards ceremony on May 27.

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To Do:

July 2:
- AOIS Submissions (Liability Insurance)

July 9:
- AOIS Submissions (Academic Calendar, Lease Agreement)

July 15:
- Phoenix Community Learning Center board meeting

July 16:
- AOIS Submissions (Distributing Statement, School Safety Plan, Test Materials Security Policy)
- KIPP Journey Academy board meeting

July 19:
- ACS Board Meeting
- Columbus Collegiate Academy board meeting

July 21:
- Springfield Academy of Excellence board meeting

July 23:
- AOIS submissions (Final Approved Board Minutes for June, Monthly Financial Report for June, Treasurer Bond)

July 30:
- AOIS submissions (SOES Profile Form, Health and Benefits Policy, Pre-Opening Assurances, Roster of Faculty, Staff, & Administration, Staff Information Teacher Certification, Licensure, or Permits

Whose IDEA? Update
Whose IDEA Is This? A Parent's Guide has been updated to reflect a change to the federal regulations related to revocation of parental consent for special education for the 2010-2011 school year. The new version, dated June 14, 2010, will be used by and after July 1, 2010. More information about the new version is available from ODE here.

EMIS reporting with OEC
With end-of-the-year EMIS reporting coming up, the Office for Exceptional Children (OEC) has recommended that special education staff to work with EMIS coordinators to ensure that data has been reported completely and accurately. In particular, OEC will be looking at your data to make sure that:
- A secondary transition code has been reported for every student who attended your LEA sometime during the school year and turned 16 prior to June 1, 2010.
- For every parental consent that has been reported, an Evaluation Team Report (ETR) has also been reported; for every initial ETR, a consent has been reported.
- For every IEP, an ETR is currently in effect and has been reported; for every ETR that found a student eligible for services, an IEP has been completed and reported;
- For any initial IEP or ETR that was late, a non-compliance reason has been reported.
- The number of preschool transition conferences reported by districts in EMIS matches the number reported to the Department of Health by Help Me Grow
- For every student with an initial IEP event reported, there has been reported referral, consent, and an initial ETR.
- Admission and withdrawal dates from the LEA have been reported accurately. (This is not a special ed responsibility, but is needed to determine compliance on some indicators. we will be checking it when we monitor data.)

OEC staff will be doing preliminary analyses for compliance indicators in the next two weeks.. However, all LEAs are encouraged to check their own data for inaccuracies. Inaccurate reporting of data that is not resolved prior to the final submission date will result in a finding of noncompliance for the LEA in 2010-2011, impacting the LEA's Determination.

Tentative SOES Profile and Year-End Closing Dates Outlined
Tentative dates for the profiles as well as the fiscal year-end closing are as follows:
July 11 – Deadline for community schools to enter SOES Profiles;
July 16 – SOES closes for FY 2010;
July 12-16 – At some point during this week, SOES profile information provided by community schools will be forwarded to sponsors for approval via electronic survey.

SOES Fatal Error Reminder: The end of the fiscal year is approaching fast. It is important that any existing errors be resolved by the time SOES closes for the fiscal year on July 16. For SOES questions, please contact Karla Manter at (614) 466-0070 or karla.mantar@ode.state.oh.us.

UPCOMING EVENTS & TRAININGS

August 6 and 12 Community School Trainings
- This free, half-day conference will take place at Edison Community College in Piqua, Ohio and at the R.G. Drage Career Technical Center is Massilon.
- For more information visit the Ohio Auditor of State training web site here.

TRAININGS IN STARS

July 19 NSLP Basic Training
- Information on the regulations and reporting procedures for School Lunch and Breakfast programs.

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