

Local Schools



TOP

Students Decide What is Taught for a Day

JUNE 12TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Poplar Bluff, Missouri - Poplar Bluff Junior High School educators figured out a sure-shot way to tap into the intellectual curiosity of students – let them decide what to learn.

Following MAP testing, Junior High faculty hosted a student professional development day on Tuesday, May 23, after asking one simple survey question: If you can come to school and learn about anything you want to learn about, what would it be?

The results included self-defense, Japanese culture, germs, sign language, feline behaviors, game meat and hip hop dance. District teachers, fellow students and community partners—even the Southeast Missouri Regional Bomb Squad—volunteered to teach the range of topics.

“I didn’t get much sleep thinking about it,” said outgoing seventh grader Carson Nagy when asked about his level of anticipation. Of the sessions he participated in, Carson said his favorite was Highway Patrol because he learned DNA tests take much longer than depicted on CSI, suspects are not so easily identified and forensic scientists experience a higher degree of frustration.

Selecting five sessions apiece gave students a taste of arena scheduling, plus exposed them to possible career paths. Eighth grader Jayvon Holloway chose a welding workshop since his father works in the field, he said. He also tossed in a ‘fun’ class: messy kitchen experiments, taught by instructor Brandon Moon of the Technical Career Center’s

Culinary Arts program.

Holocaust, presented by social studies teacher Josh Wesemann, who also hosted survival 101, was suggested by eighth grader Sierra Sievers. Her favorite session, however, turned out to be mystery dissection during which students handled fetal pigs under the instruction of Ashley Woolard and Krista Yarbrow of PBJHS.

Communication arts instructor Julie Gambill, who helped put on a workshop about horses, commented that she gained more insight about what students do not know from the experiment.

“It’s career day meets club day,” incoming Junior High principal Candace Warren said. The brainchild of Warren, student PD day was conceived earlier this year during a Midwest Education Technology Community conference she attended in St. Louis. “It has every aspect—the arts, science, physical activities—to meet students’ interests, expose careers and ultimately make a well-rounded person.”

Shown in the photo: Hicks Animal Hospital staff introduces participants to 30-year-old tortoise, Toracle.

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

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