



KIPPsters work with scientists

Wednesday, September 25, 2013
Blytheville Courier News

KIPP Blytheville College Preparatory School's sixth-grade class had their first Aspirnaut lab Sept. 17. The Aspirnaut program is a partnership that connects Vanderbilt University with rural schools to recruit and develop the science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) workforce necessary for the 21st century.

This partnership also allows KIPP Blytheville students to interact with and learn from passionate scientists.

One aspect of the program is Aspirnaut Videoconferencing, which is the beaming of inquiry-based hands-on STEM labs from Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn., taught by STEM undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and faculty via audio-video technology.

During the course, a Vanderbilt representative leads the experiment with students, while KIPP classroom teachers provide hands-on assistance during the lab. The STEM labs occur weekly, each of which revolve around a scientific theme that helps KIPPsters develop critical thinking and problem solving skills as they discuss the ways that science impacts their lives on a day-to-day basis.

Tuesday's lab, the first in a year-long series, was titled, "Introduction to Science and Chemistry in a Ziploc Bag." Students combined phenol red solution with baking soda and anhydrous calcium chloride in a Ziploc bag, then quickly sealed the bag. After following the steps of the experiment and observing the changes caused by the mixed contents, students discussed the chemical reactions with their Vanderbilt instructor.

As a participant school district, KIPP Delta Public Schools also has the opportunity to send high school students to a pre-college summer program each year. Students spend six weeks working in state-of-the-art labs alongside

medical researchers. At the conclusion of the program, students present their research to an audience that includes post-doctoral students and their own parents. KIPP Blytheville's middle school students also get to visit Vanderbilt University during the summer and participate in the "Aspirnaut Summer Experience." Last year, Ly Hoang, Diamond Watson, Anaiyah Henderson, and Gregory Robinson (all of the Class of 2019) attended the program with Meghan Brown, their sixth-grade science teacher.

KIPP Blytheville currently has 30 more seats available in grades four through eight.

cpinkard@couriernews.net

© Copyright 2013, Blytheville Courier News

Story URL: <http://www.couriernews.net/story/2007310.html>