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By **David Owens** June 17, 2026



Dr. Billy Hudson of Vanderbilt University Medical Center talks during a session with arts educators Monday morning at Wynne Junior High School. The workshop explored the connection between science and the arts. (Photo credit: David Owens/Wynne Progress.)



Maestro Igor Babailov (with Dr. Billy Hudson) led this week's workshop. (Photo credit: David Owens/Wynne Progress.)

WYNNE — The Wynne School District held a workshop for area arts educators this week that was focused on the connection of science and art.

The workshop was organized by Drs. Julie and Billy Hudson of the Aspirnaut program at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville. It featured Maestro Igor Babailov, a Russian-born portrait artist who has painted several U.S. presidents, Supreme Court Justices, and four popes.

“The whole idea of this is to bring a new fresh start to the educational system... to let the teachers know the connection between the arts and the science, which has always existed in nature including in the past and the curriculum in schools,” Babailov said. “It was very rewarding for students. Now days there’s a bigger and bigger gap between arts and science, unfortunately.”

Babailov said part of that is due to rise of certain technologies, including artificial intelligence or AI.



"AI is a great invention just like a computer was and the camera at some point, but we have to remind ourselves that we are the ones who created it," he said.

The Hudsons helped establish an Aspirnaut lab at Wynne High School. Dr. Billy Hudson said he hopes to have another workshop in the future with science teachers with the goal of eventually bringing all of the participants back together.

Teachers from Wynne, Harrisburg, Palestine-Wheatley, Gosnell, Newport, Osceola, and Barton participated in this week's workshop, which concluded with an outdoor session at Village Creek State Park. Other sessions focused on human portraits and the important role of art in STEM education with help from the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission.

Maestro Igor Babailov works on a sketch during an outdoor session at Village Creek State Park Wednesday. (Photo courtesy of Brady Michael/Wynne Public Schools.)

Babailov also completed a portrait of Wynne art teacher Holly Melton. (Photo courtesy of Brady Michael/Wynne Public Schools.)