



For Immediate Release

Monday, February 5, 2018

www.sde.idaho.gov

Media Contacts

Kristin Rodine

Media relations specialist

208-332-6807

krodine@sde.idaho.gov

Treasure Valley kids get STEAM'd at Future Design Academy Feb. 5-8

(BOISE) – Students from four Valley school districts will flex their creative and artistic talents in a STEM environment during daylong Future Design Academy sessions over the next three months.

Starting Feb. 5, a group of Kuna students will spend six Mondays learning and creating at the Reuseum in Garden City. On Tuesdays, the weeklong academy will host Middleton students. Wednesdays will bring Mountain Home students to the academy, with Boise students taking center stage on Thursdays. The learning and fun will culminate in an afternoon celebration May 4 at JUMP in Boise, where academy students from all four districts will exhibit their favorite projects.

Take STEM skills (science, technology, engineering and math), combine them with art and add an emphasis on design to get STEAM'd, the set of skills students in grades 4 through 6 will exercise at the academy, said Dr. Peggy Wenner, arts and humanities coordinator for the State Department of Education.

“To me, this is a perfect combination of gifted education and the arts,” Wenner said. “It’s true integration: Both disciplines are treated equally.”

Working in a “maker space” filled with art supplies, nuts and bolts, electrical wires, computer software and more, students design and build STEAM'd projects such as junk-drawer robots, an automaton and a Calder-inspired self-portrait using wire. Each participant will design a personal logo, create it on 3D software and print it on a 3-D printer.

Wenner designed the academy and debuted it last year in collaboration with the Boise, Middleton and West Ada school districts and Reuseum, a nonprofit STEM Center that provides workshops for children. It was a hit with participants, she said: “Everybody wanted to take it again this year.”

A new cohort of students is participating in the 2018 Future Design Academy, which now hosts Boise, Middleton, Kuna and Mountain Home students. Each district's gifted-talented coordinator selected about 10 students for the academy who have both gifts and challenges that help them benefit from and excel at the projects, Wenner said. All have exhibited visual and spatial talent, and their projects combine science, technology, engineering, art and design.

Through their six academy sessions, students not only complete projects but tap talents and abilities that may not have been recognized in the past, Wenner said. The essence of most projects, she said, is "to find a problem and create a solution."

Each week of the academy, participating students bring home a newsletter that describes projects and provides further resources.

Students' efforts are guided by Wenner, Reuseum STEM workshop instructor Glenn Martin and retired teacher and art consultant Diane Garmire, with assistance from other retired educators.

###

Editors and reporters: See for yourselves! Reporters, videographers and photographers are welcome to attend an academy session. To find out about the academy's daily schedule and make coverage arrangements, contact Kristin Rodine at krodine@sde.idaho.gov or 208-332-6807, or Dr. Peggy Wenner at pjwenner@sde.idaho.gov.