Laing Middle School of Science and Technology students, all 669 of them, took part in the first school-wide STEM BLITZ of this year. Thanks to donations from parents, The Post and Courier and connections with the Moultrie News, the students were surprised with eight sheets of newspaper and one meter of masking tape and tasked to make a table. The table had to measure eight inches high and be able to hold a heavy book. This is the first of several such “surprise” projects (STEM BLITZ) that are meant to open the door to discussions with students on ways to approach a challenge.

As background, the businesses in the greater Charleston region often comment on the lack of potential employees with important “soft skills” such as problem solving, ability to work in groups and effec...
communication skills.

In response to the feedback from local employers, Laing Middle School of Science and Technology is in its second year of implementing a whole school STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) initiative. This means that every subject, even English Language Arts (ELA) and Social Studies, are approached with the engineering design process in mind.

The engineering design process is as follows:

Define the Problem

Do Background Research

Specify Requirements

Brainstorm Solutions

Choose the Best Solution

Do Development Work

Build a Prototype

Test and Redesign

STEM projects and the use of the engineering design process are meant to enhance the understanding of curriculum standards as well as teaching crucial skills for the workforce. For example, in sixth grade social studies students studying Mesopotamia and ziggurats (a type of temple) used the Sketch-up App to make their own ziggurat. This hands-on creativity makes education fun and reinforces the subject matter. Later in the year, in ELA, the students study alternative energy and write a paper on the type of alternative energy that appeals to each particular student. The engineering design method integrates perfectly with the steps of the writing process.

The staff and administration of Laing would love to partner with the community and put this "show on the road" to teach other schools how to implement this model of teaching real world skills to our f
workforce. If you are interested in learning more, please contact our STEM coach, Mel Goodwin, Fmgoodwi8@bellsouth.net.

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