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NEWS RELEASE
May 23, 2016
For Immediate Release

Vision 2020 Inspires Innovation

Media Centers Receive Awards to Help Continue the Transition

Pensacola, FL: As part of the Superintendent's Vision 2020 plan, Escambia County School District library media specialists were challenged last summer to transition their school's libraries into Innovation Centers and to rethink floor plans and material usage to create Makerspaces.

"It was exciting to see so many schools' Innovation Center Specialists look for ways to reinvent their space and shift their mind sets," said Malcolm Thomas. "Spaces that were previously used for storage or teacher workrooms were cleared out and cleaned to become student Makerspaces. Students had a place to be creative and keep their projects to finish on another day."

A rubric was created to track each Innovation Center's progress with implementing Makerspaces. Library media specialists and principals completed the rubrics and provided documentation of their efforts. The rubrics and documentation were reviewed by a committee and eleven schools are being honored as being "exemplary" in their design and implementation of the Makerspace opportunities in their Innovation Centers. The Innovation Specialists at these schools are being awarded \$250 from the Superintendent's Circle fund to support the Makerspaces in their schools and further develop ideas and creativity.

Congratulations go to these exemplary schools and to all the schools incorporating Makerspaces in their Innovation Centers!

- Ensley Elementary (Library Media Specialist, Myra Palmer)
- Ferry Pass Elementary (Library Media Specialist, Valerie Kaye)
- Northview High (Library Media Specialist, Alison Robinson)
- Oakcrest Elementary (Library Media Specialist, Michelle Lingo)
- Pine Meadow Elementary (Library Media Specialist, Debby Dorough)
- Ransom Middle (Library Media Specialist, Crystal Roberts)
- Tate High (Library Media Specialist, Mitzi Allen)
- Washington High (Library Media Specialist, Alisha Wilson)
- Weis Elementary (Library Media Specialist, Jennifer Kemp)

- West Florida High (Library Media Specialist, Linda Quinn)
- Woodham Middle (Library Media Specialist, Hazel McCormack)

Innovation Center Specialists have also worked hard this year to find ways to fund specific ideas. Many received grants from the Escambia Public Schools Foundation. Twelve schools each received part of a \$28,000 grant from the Panhandle Public Access Network that allowed them to purchase some big ticket items.

“Some used grant money to buy items like Minecraft, small robots, circuits, and even 3D printers,” added Sheila Brandt, ECSD’s Media Services Coordinator. “We also saw amazing examples of recycling. Even the packing material that came in the boxes with the new Chromebooks were repurposed in creative ways, such as a model of Shakespeare’s Globe Theater created with the material at Washington High School.”

“As librarians, none of us ever want to see kids stop checking out books. This transformation has not meant that, in fact some schools saw an increase in their checkout rate,” Brandt added. “Instead, we are excited to see increased levels of energy and excitement when students come in to be creative, and they find a book for inspiration, or vice versa.”

“One rubric contained a comment from a high school Innovation Center Specialist that said that at first this seemed overwhelming,” added Thomas. “But now, she said she knows this was the most positive thing she could have done in her library for their students. It is my pleasure to present funds to these schools to help keep the innovations coming.”

Media queries about any event listed on this release should be directed to Kim Stefansson, at 850-469-6219 or kstefansson@escambia.k12.fl.us.

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ECSD prc 674/2016