



Japhet School middle school teachers Susan Eggleston-Butler, left, and Liz Grunow, right, pack up a middle school classroom to prepare for a move to a larger room, which will house fifth through eighth grades, as well as a new STEM lab.

Photo by Patricia O'Blenes

Japhet School in Clawson to install STEM lab

By: Sarah Wojcik | Royal Oak Review | Published July 14, 2021

CLAWSON — Thanks to a \$10,000 grant, Japhet School, a preschool through eighth grade private school with approximately 50 students in Clawson, will install a new Science, Technology, Engineering and Math lab this summer.

The lab will serve Japhet School's middle schoolers — the fifth through eighth grades — and the reconfiguration will impact the entire school.

Head of School Kerri Vizena said the middle schoolers are currently split into two classrooms. The new lab will combine both classes into a larger room that formerly functioned as a space for specials such as art, music, language arts and Spanish.

The specials will be held in another room, and all other classrooms will move with the exception of one preschool room.

Vizena added that the grant is from a group in California that wanted to keep its name private. She said a team from Japhet pitched the idea, and the group supported the school's mission "to nurture and prepare each child for life by integrating character education with a strong academic program."

"We are truly excited to launch this new program in the fall," she said. "All will be new, from microscopes to tables, seating, and anything they'll be using as far as equipment for earth science, life science and physical science."

Depending on the lessons, middle school students can gather as a large group or break out into smaller, more dynamic groups to facilitate students' creativity and different learning styles.

Liz Grunow, the fifth and sixth grade homeroom teacher who teaches science to all middle school grades, said she is looking forward to getting to spend more time with all of the middle school students.

"With COVID, we saw when students had to work a little more individually, it brought a little more creativity to what they were doing," she said. "It's an exciting time to be able to straddle the hands-on with the on-screen learning."

She added that the increased space will be ideal for growing middle schoolers, as well as their increased need for freedom.

"We were fully utilizing our space we currently have to the point of moving into the hall," Grunow said. "Our goal is to make sure what they're working on is authentic enough that it could be put out there to our population or beyond and really make a difference."

Susan Eggleston-Butler, the seventh and eighth grade homeroom teacher who teaches global studies to all of the middle school grades, said the reaction has been nothing but positive from both students and parents.

"They have great trust in us," she said.

Eggleston-Butler added that she was touched when faculty announced the new STEM lab and students thanked them



Liz Grunow, the fifth and sixth grade homeroom teacher who teaches science to all middle school grades, holds a microscope at Japhet School in Clawson June 17. A new STEM lab will include new digital microscopes.

Photo by Patricia O'Blenes

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and also asked if they could help with the transition during the summer.

"As educators, we went into the parent meeting with our research done. I had my points, but all we got were positive responses," she said. "I really have to thank our parent community for wanting to help (with the move). It's wonderful to have that support."

Japhet School is located at 839 S. Crooks Road, north of Normandy Road.

For more information about Japhet School, visit japhetschool.org or call (248) 585-9150.

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