

Kearny joins with college for science program

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For the third year the Kearny School District has partnered with Montclair State University (MSU) in the GK-12 Fellows in the Middle program.

The program, which is funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation (NCF), is a joint effort between participating school districts and universities throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. The members consist of middle school science and math teachers, their students, and graduate students from the universities.

This year graduate students (fellows) from the science and math departments at MSU aligned with Schuyler and Washington school teachers in Kearny to deliver cross curriculum lessons to eighth grade students.

The topic for year three was ecosystems, which aligns with the 8th grade science and math curricula. The graduate students offered their expertise enhancing student learning and bringing real life lessons to the classroom.

Learning was also taken out of the classroom as the program funds multiple school field trips. Kearny students visited the Great Swamp in Chatham where they spent the first part of the day learning how to navigate with the use of a compass. After that the students fished in the pond they used prior knowledge and a dichotomous key to identify what they had caught.

The second trip brought students to Captain Jack's fishing boat where they set sail off the shore of Sandy Hook to partake in the Learning at Sea Program. They hoisted crab cages in the water and returned later to retrieve them and identify the sea animals they had caught. Then Captain John took the boat a few miles off shore where a large fishing net was dropped into the water. Students helped pull the net up which was full of a variety of sea animals including horseshoe and spider crabs, flounder, sea urchins, and frog fish. Students listened intently as the crew gave details about each animal. All animals were then thrown back into the water.

The last endeavor was a visit to MSU for Math/Science Day. Here students toured the campus and learned what college life will offer them when they finish high school.

The closing ceremony consisted of a contest where school posters were judged and awarded and teachers, students and fellows were acknowledged for their participation in the program.

Students not only enjoyed working with the MSU fellows but were able to experience real applications of science and math. The program will continue next year.