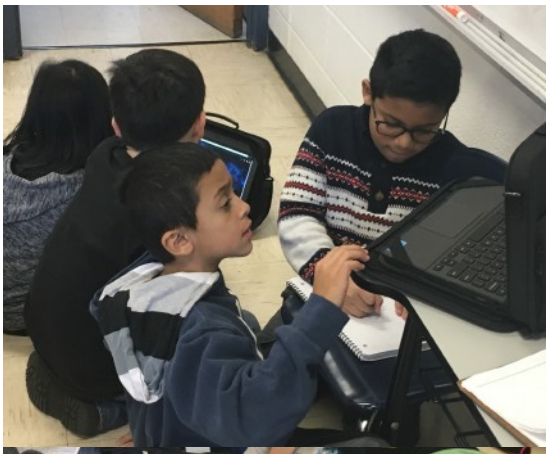
Hopatcong Borough Schools

Press Release

Learning Today. Leading Tomorrow.

Students use Defined STEM to learn real-world problem solving

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, January 3, 2017



Hopatcong teachers recently completed training in Defined STEM, an online platform that enables teachers to provide the application of knowledge to students through the use of project-based learning (PBL), real world careers and meaningful reading and writing activities. Throughout the district, teachers have begun to utilize this new learning tool in their classrooms.

During the week of December 19th, students in Miss Douglas's third grade class, alongside with Mrs. Neu, started a project-based learning lesson using Defined STEM. Students accessed their project through the Defined STEM website on their Chromebooks. The task selected for the class was titled Toy Manufacturer. The class was divided into groups of three, and each group had the goal to design a toy to be placed in a "jolly meal" for the restaurant "McDougal's". Each team worked diligently, creating a toy design for boys' and girls' meals. Students conducted researched before a decision was made on their specific toy design. They then had to sketch their design as well as a write up for a marketing plan to sell their product. To close the lesson, each team had to pitch their ideas to the heads of "McDougal's" (Miss Douglas and Mrs. Neu).

Ms. Bisignani's kindergarten class also recently completed a Defined STEM lesson. The kindergarten students studied the importance of robots in our modern world. The students had to invent a robot that can do a particular job or solve a problem. Design problems like this touch upon "big idea" concepts; technological design is a creative process that anyone can do which may result in new inventions and innovations. Students also ponder the essential question: In what ways do humans create, use and modify technologies? The kindergartners worked hard to invent and design their new robot creations.

The district is pleased to see teachers embracing the project-based learning model and utilizing Defined STEM in creative ways. Innovative technologies and teaching methods like Defined STEM engage students in relevant, real-world learning which can help equip our students with 21st century skills.