

# IC The Creek

Indian Creek Local School District Newsletter

November 2024

## ICHS Natural Resources Students Speak in Columbus

Students in the natural resources pathway at Indian Creek High School had a chance to update state leaders and zoo officials about the hellbender pilot project underway at the school.

Seven seniors and one junior traveled to the Columbus Zoo on Oct. 29 where they addressed representatives of the Columbus and Toledo Zoos as well as the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Panta Career Center and Purdue University as part of the program to save the endangered salamander from extinction. The hellbender has deep roots in the Jefferson County area, including the Cross Creek region within the school district, but time and environmental changes led to a decrease in the population. The school has since partnered with the state and other groups to change that and ICHS is the first public school to take part in the program. The students conducted a PowerPoint presentation to outline how they were caring for Chief, the school's hellbender ambassador, as well as nearly 20 juvenile salamanders with the hopes of eventually releasing the latter back into the wild.

Students took turns sharing information about how they tended to and recorded data about the salamanders' growth. They are responsible for feeding and measuring the hellbenders on a daily basis and maintaining the younger set in a biosecure facility near the science classes, while Chief remains in a separate tank on the upper level of the building. They received Chief in June of 2023, and while its gender has not been determined the students have referred to the adolescent amphibian as "she," noting that Chief has remained healthy and grown to 351 grams and was 33 centimeters long. Plans are to hold a gender reveal in conjunction with The Wilds. Another 20 juvenile hellbenders were added last year but two have since perished, presumably to stress and saprolegnia, a disease found in freshwater aquaculture. The remaining juveniles are active and growing, presently measuring 15-22 centimeters long and weighing 20-30



**Eight Indian Creek High School students traveled to the Columbus Zoo on Oct. 29 to present on the school's pilot program to save the hellbender salamanders from extinction. The salamanders, which are long rooted in the local area, are an endangered species and the program in partnership with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Columbus Zoo and other entities hopes to bolster the population. ICHS students are currently caring for one adolescent hellbender ambassador and 18 juvenile salamanders in the hope of releasing the latter back into the wild.**

grams.

They touched upon the census of the salamanders and their health, mortality, behavior and capacity. Currently, the hellbenders have been behaving regularly and showed no signs of distress, and while the students believed the project was at its maximum capacity of what they can care for, they hoped it would change in the future. At the conclusion of their presentation, the students said they faced some challenges and complications but learned a lot through the program, such as the importance of biosecurity measures, teamwork and communication. Most notably, they have learned how the repopulation of endangered animals should work.

Crystal Fluharty, who teaches the natural resources career-tech education (CTE) program, said it gave the officials a chance to learn what the students have been doing as part of the project.

"Twice a year we have a Hellbender part-

nership meeting and all of the organizations and facilities included in the hellbender repopulation program attend. We meet and discuss how the Hellbenders are doing and the students put together a PowerPoint presentation and discussed their status," Fluharty said, adding that they did a fantastic job with their address. She said hopes are for ICHS and the Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District, which has also been part of the project, to host a meeting at the school in late March.

Students who attended and took turns speaking at the event included junior Anna Bradley and seniors Selina Stevens, Chrissy Simpson, Aiden McMahon, Alayna Starr, Grasyyn Danielson, Elijah Gilman and Nandhana Ranjith. They agreed it was a great experience and en-

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# CTE Advisory Committees Review Programs

Indian Creek High School Career Technical Education Advisory Board committees met Nov. 7 to view programs initiated to spur careers for students.

Groups representing natural resources, interactive media, engineering, business and more presented updates on what students were learning at a combined meeting at the high school, where more than 30 people gathered for dinner and discussion to review each of the school's CTE offerings. Among the business groups were West Virginia Northern Community College and Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District as well as local trade organizations and financial planners.

Julie Robinson, family and consumer sciences instructor, welcomed attendants, led introductions and said the CTE program has grown since beginning with interactive media. Since then, students could earn a variety of certifications and work-based learning.

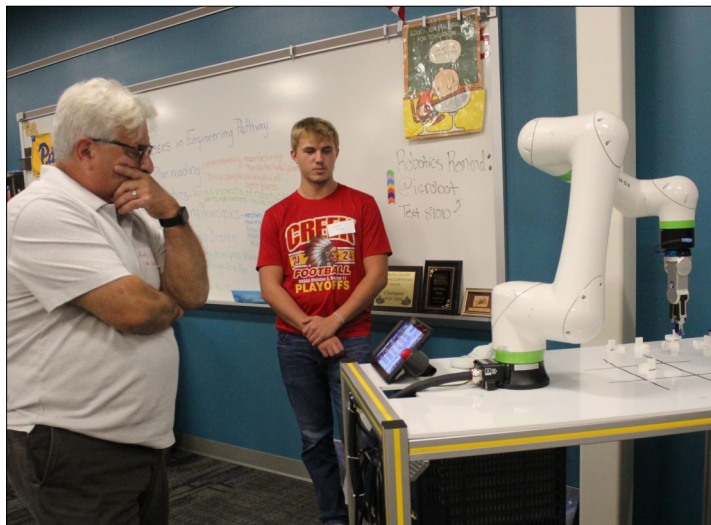
Crystal Fluharty and her students gave an overview of what has been occurring in the natural resources program, which included the latest on the new hellbender pilot program in conjunction with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and Columbus Zoo. As of now, one adolescent and nearly 20 juvenile salamanders are being cared for with the younger set to eventually be released back into the wild to repopulate the endangered species.

Fluharty said members were currently undertaking the Bags to Benches program in which plastic bags would be recycled to create benches around the area. For now, they may be placed at the softball field but can also be added in the community. Her students took turns discussing the pathway, with Grasyndanielson saying they need a total of 250 hours to work in their path to earn points toward graduation while classmate Aiden McMahon said they work independently and also complete apprenticeships to gain hours. He added that students work in the biosecure room prior to classes to feed the juvenile hellbenders, clean the tank and record measurements and data to submit to the state and zoo as part of the pilot project. Student Nandhana Ranjith continued that she and others care for hellbender ambassador Chief and record her data for officials. Elijah Gilman interjected that they can earn credentials for OSHA, GIS mapping and drone piloting. Other highlights included pathway classes for environmental science, wildlife and forestry.

Interactive Media instructor Taylor Scott led a presentation on offerings in her class, including multimedia, digital photography and web design. Scott said the media lab was student run and projects have ranged from flyers to creating social media promotions. Students learn digital design techniques such as Photoshop, complete work-based hours and learn multimedia management to video editing.

CTE Department Head Dave Moffat said his tech support services program included the Creek Squad, which involved students performing information technology (IT) services on systems in each school building and the addition of the FANUC robotic arms to perform tasks designed by the pupils.

"Last year, we received a state CTE grant for roughly \$150,000 for equipment. We came up with the idea to have students work on equipment and we created the Creek Squad so our students would fix technological issues inside



Indian Creek High School student Colton Giusto demonstrates the FANUC robotic arm in Barbara Turner's engineering classroom for business advisory committee member Andrew Viglianco during a career-technical education (CTE) advisory board meeting on Nov. 7. Area business, education and trades officials met with CTE teachers and students for an update on programs before splitting into individual committees to learn more about their respective fields.

the buildings," Moffat continued. "They have stepped up and have academics in the morning and go to the schools in the afternoon. They have hardware, software and networking [projects]."

Additionally, students work with two large FANUC robotic arms along with the engineering class and learn programming to operate the systems. His class also offers CompTA, A+ and networking certifications. Moffat also earned his drone pilot's license and partners with Kent State University to give students college credit and certification.

Engineering instructor Barb Turner said her program has evolved through time and students learn about the impact of engineering in the workplace. Activities included visiting TIMET Corp. in Toronto to shadow engineers and working to obtain work-based

***"We get to know kids more than any other teacher can. We look at the state's highest paying jobs without degrees and last year we had a senior with an internship that led to a job. Your impact helped a new generation go to work."***

**-David Moffat  
CTE Department Head**

hours.

"I initially taught a pre-engineering class and then taught how engineering applied to manufacturing," she said, adding that she has a robotics class with a team that has competed in both Ohio and Pennsylvania. "I am hoping the team goes to the signature competition at Kalahari in January."

Meanwhile, business instructor Johnna Provenzano said there were plenty of technical and professional level careers and her 70 students learn business foundations, operations management and strategic entrepreneurship, among other subjects. Provenzano said weekly entrepreneurship podcasts are created featuring local business leaders and guests were lined up to February, with her students interviewing the guests while the interactive media pupils overseeing the editing. Students also operate the Spear-It

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# IC, Steubenville Set for Rematch at Turkey Bowl

Indian Creek and Steubenville High Schools are meeting up once again for a friendly rivalry on the gridiron during the second-annual Turkey Bowl Unified Sports Flag Football game on Nov. 26.

The schools will square off at Harding Stadium at noon where general students and those with intellectual disabilities will team up for a fun-filled game on the field. Students from Indian Creek and Steubenville will attend to cheer on their teams while it is also open to the public. Tom Mort coordinates Unified Sports for Indian Creek while Ross Ivkovich is overseeing efforts for Big Red. Indian Creek first hosted Steubenville at Kettlewell Memorial Stadium in Wintersville last year and officials opted to change the venue this time.

"We played at our stadium last year, and Coach Ike and I agreed that we would play at Steubenville this year," Mort said.

"Harding Stadium is iconic, and our kids are really looking forward to all the 'bells and whistles' that come with playing there. This is our first away game, and the kids are really looking forward to riding on the bus and the anticipation of playing a game when we get to the stadium."

He added that Indian Creek Middle School students were also playing and there were hopes to develop a middle school-level program in the future. In addition to the players, ICHS will also bring cheerleaders and other students to rally their team.

"Steubenville City Schools is providing two buses for students to watch," said Ivkovich. "We're playing Indian Creek and our band will be playing."

The first event ended in a hard-fought 7-7 tie and the players were all looking forward to the rematch

"The Big Red football players were won-

derful, and one student walked around the next day like he was the king of the castle," Ivkovich recalled, adding that the Big Red football team's athletes get plenty of enjoyment themselves. "The football players have more fun coaching."

Meanwhile, Mort said the game was more than just about winning.

"We are not only showing the importance of inclusion in sports, but we are also developing a great partnership between Creek and Big Red. A lot of people get caught up in sports rivalries, but the impact that unified sports have on all who attend and play in the game transcends rivalries," he concluded. "This is open to the public and we would love to have as many people as possible come out to support both teams."

"Anyone who attends this game will leave with love in their heart and a smile on their face."

## Unified Sports Team Scores up Victory at Spooky Bowl

Students from Indian Creek and Buckeye Local high schools had some ghoulishly good fun on the gridiron as teams met up for the Spooky Bowl Unified Sports flag football game on Halloween.

The mixed teams of general pupils and students with intellectual disabilities took to the field at Kettlewell Stadium while classmates from both schools cheered on from the stands. It was the first time the players faced off on the field, although the schools previously took part in a track event last spring at Edison. However, the purpose was not about winning the game but the spirit of teamwork and inclusion.

Despite Creek's narrow 38-36 finish, ICHS Unified Sports Advisor Tom Mort said it was an amazing day of camaraderie and friendly competition.

"Buckeye Local scored on the last play of the game and went for a two-point conversion, but [Creek player] Sal Barcalow stopped the player on the half-yard line," Mort noted. "Buckeye brought a wonderful team. It was fantastic."

Additionally, the Redskins' Misha Amos ran for a touchdown while teammates Isaiah Thompson-Yost, Caleb Mannion and Brayden Stewart each garnered two TD's, plus Zach Vida interrupted an opponent's pass in the first play of the game to earn a touchdown. Other teammates included Taylor Borham, Nick Eddy, Logan Westlake and David Howell.

"It was really great. The band played and the whole student body was there, plus [ICMS Principal] Dr. Holly Minch-Hick



**Indian Creek's Brayden Stewart catches a touchdown pass during the Spooky Bowl Unified Sports flag football game at Kettlewell Stadium on Oct. 31. The team took on Buckeye Local and narrowly won by a score of 38-36.**

brought sixth graders and the ICHS Business Professionals of America had hot chocolate and popcorn," Mort continued. "This was to celebrate inclusion, and we would not have had this game without Sal Barcalow. He practiced with the kids every day and did the plays."

Lindsay Orr, BLHS unified sports advisor, said her team was equally thrilled to be part of the event.

"The students loved playing in the Spooky Bowl," Orr said, noting that several were initially apprehensive about participating. "When they got there, they changed their minds. I was so happy for them. All of the students loved participating, even some who said they were not going to participate were asking to play and even wanted to go back in after they

did play. They are super excited for other sports and next year's flag football, as well. They have been talking about possible plays and names for the plays."

Team members included Logan Coe, Michael Grimm, Clayton Griffith, Emily Dearth-Harris, Ryan Cook, Tommy Miller, Nick Abshire, Trey McCoy, Shawn Jordan, Clayton Doty and Kadan Rhynehart while cheerleaders were Shyla Louk, Emma Castillo, Zoey Ralston, Olivia Reimer and Orr.

Panther athletes made a total of five touchdowns during the matchup, including Coe. Rhynehart, Doty and McCoy, while Grimm and Griffith also made two-point conversions.

Orr said members were already looking forward to more sporting events and she hopes to host festivities in Connorville.

"My students are already talking about basketball," she added. "Buckeye is going to try to host something, and I am thinking we may call it Holiday Hoops if we can do it in December."

Meanwhile, the program has also spurred more interest in participation.

"After we returned from the Spooky Bowl, some kids asked if they could join unified sports for the basketball game. A couple of students also asked if volleyball could be added and I said I would talk to the other schools," Orr commented. "We will also do track again this year."

Meanwhile, Mort is excited to do even more unified games this year and said there were many plans in the works.

# ICMS Media Center Becomes Makerspace

Indian Creek Middle School's media center has gotten a makeover of sorts and is now being utilized as a makerspace for creativity.

Library Coordinator Angela Penner said the facility still includes library books and seating for classes but also gives students access to 3-D printers to media and robotics. The room also includes two large interactive flat screens, a color laser printer and laminating machines for projects.

"Students are responsible for staff spotlights and kids interview teachers as a class project, plus we do marketing and media literacy," said Penner. "We've also changed the class name from media literacy to the STEM Media Lab."

She said the center also provides VEX Robotics and the school acquired STEM Dremel machines and a heat press, while another heat press was donated by local businessman Shawn Villamagna of River-view Tee Designs in Wellsburg. Penner said she worked with school administrators to develop the site over the summer to create a real hands-on learning site for pupils.

"The idea was to have student engagement and I had a conversation with [Principal] Dr. Holly Minch-Hick [and then-Assistant Principal] Scott Abercrombie and they liked the idea," she said. "I previously worked at Indian Creek High School and at WTOV and I was thinking about kids learning to use their creativity."

Penner also worked with educator David Guess to acquire machines while paraprofessional Carla Hirschfeld also assisted with the endeavor, and Penner hopes to offer kids more variety in the re-



Indian Creek Middle School's media center has become a makerspace with an array of high-tech equipment to help students learn in the modern age with 3-D printers, robotics and interactive media to help them make the grade.

lated arts programs. Their first project was for eighth graders to create designs for T-shirts and Villamagna created transfers, or iron-on designs, with the top five choices selected by the student body. Students then pressed those designs onto shirts. In another project, sixth-and-seventh-grade pupils have been spotlighting teachers and staff members.

Pupils also crafted PowerPoint presentations about cybercrime in the digital era and how to remain safe from incidents through apps and social media.

Penner was impressed with the result of their creations and said the makerspace has

made a positive impact.

"Students are living in the digital world and their innovative thinking has been amazing," she said. "I think the kids like it. It's a learning curve for their future."

She noted that everyone has been working hard and the program carried over into the Sycamore Center afterschool program.

"Our school is working with the afterschool program and receives great support, and I know our school teachers are doing a great job," she concluded.

Penner said the first class wrapped up on Nov. 1 and a new crop of students rotated into the program.

## Incentive Program Designed to Bolster Attendance

Indian Creek Middle School is looking to bolster attendance through a new incentive program that is designed to inspire more student involvement.

Assistant Principal Todd Herman said efforts are underway with an attendance challenge where grade levels vie to maintain high classroom attendance in hopes of obtaining a reward. Each month, students work towards their prize and have gained extra time for recess or gaming.

"We'll do this every month for the rest of the school year," Herman said. "We update a poster in the cafeteria daily and sought suggestions from kids for incentive ideas."

He said officials recognized a need to inspire the students and promote positive behaviors.

"We did this because we saw an issue with missing assignments and created the challenge. The eighth grade received an extra half-hour of recess on Nov. 1 [after winning the previous

contest]. Every grade level had missing assignments and this has been reduced by 70 percent."

He said with the attendance initiative, students not only improve their learning capabilities and grades but they also gain extra time for fun and interaction with games in the gym or the cafeteria. The school has previously conducted challenges based on the FIFA World Cup Series and the game "Hungry, Hungry Hippos" that resulted in kids earning rewards such as a human version of the board

game. Leaders have also tracked good behavior and attendance and students have earned golden tickets to acquire clothing or treat at the school store or save up to take part in a field trip. Past trips ranged from seeing a movie at the Plaza Theater in Weirton to attending a Wheeling Nailers hockey game.

"We still have nine weeks' incentives for attendance and we also give them golden tickets that they can use to go on the field trips," Herman said.

***"We saw an issue with missing assignments and created the challenge. Every grade level had missing assignments and this has been reduced by 70 percent."***

**-Assistant Principal Todd Herman**



Cross Creek Elementary kicked off its Leader in Me initiative on Nov. 1 with videos and discussion by Principal Dan Hartman and Brittany Shank. Schools districtwide are implementing the program, which aims to improve academics, school culture and leadership skills. Plans are to develop leadership teams to be proactive and build tomorrow's leaders.

## Leader In Me Program Underway at Cross Creek

Nearly 500 students at Cross Creek Elementary are learning the importance of improving themselves after officially kicking off the Leader in Me program on Nov. 1.

Two programs were held in the school gym for grades PreK-2 and 3-4 which were led by Principal Dan Hartman and guidance counselor Brittany Shank and included videos about the initiative, one of which featured CCE Student Senate members demonstrating leadership skills. Administrators and teachers underwent training to implement the Utah-based program, something which has also been included in buildings districtwide, and will continue over a four-year period with the goal of creating a high-trust environment in schools, building student achievement, improving learning.

The practices are based on educator Stephen Covey's book, "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People," and range from being proactive and setting goals to embracing teamwork and taking care of one's physical, mental and emotional well-being.

CCE officials plan to target academics, particularly in math and reading; utilizing a common language for improvement; focusing on what is important; creating a leadership environment; putting first things first; and thinking win-win.

"We're talking about leaders," Hartman told the students. "You've done the job of

learning what it means to be a leader. Leader in Me [means] everybody has potential to be a leader and it gives us the skills to succeed in academics, in interactions with each other and in being a leader in life. We're learning the seven habits of Leader in Me throughout our day and throughout our year."

He said Shank instilled those facets each day during morning announcements and the mission was to inspire the leader in everyone.

**"Leader in Me [means] everybody has potential to be a leader and it gives us the skills to succeed in academics, in interactions with each other and in being a leader in life."**

**-CCE Principal Dan Hartman**

Students then watched a video explaining the seven habits and how the children could utilize them while Shank featured a second video of fourth-grade student senate members practicing leadership skills both inside the school and on the bus as a model for their peers.

"We talked a lot about our mission. What do we want people who come to the building to know about us," Shank asked, to which students replied, "to be good leaders."

The student senate's video touched upon expectations in the classroom, hallway, cafeteria, restroom and on the school bus, which ranged from listening, making good choices and trying their best to being respectful, staying in their seats and following safety rules.

"Our teachers, principals and staff are all showing leadership qualities. We celebrate leadership at Cross Creek Elementary in a variety of ways with shout-outs and we want to show you that we see you and thank you for your leadership skills."

She announced leaders of the month from each classroom and said they would be recognized with a photo hanging in the building along with a token to obtain a book from the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) book vending machine.

"Every day we hope you live out the seven habits as you learn in the classroom so you can celebrate being part of Leader in Me," she concluded.

Students taking part shared what they have learned about the program.

"You should always be helpful," said fourth-grader Krysta Dille.

"I'm learning you should be proactive, you should be helpful and you should concentrate on your work," added classmate Sadie Martin.

"Be kind," responded fourth-grade student Jordan Telfer.

# Indian Creek Middle School Holding Club Day Sessions

Indian Creek Middle School students are learning how they can give back by partaking in Club Day activities on Nov. 1.

Pupils gathered in the cafetorium for arena-style registration and chose their top three organizations of interest, then signed up for a group. They then ventured to select classrooms based upon their club of choice to meet with advisors and learn about their responsibilities. Assistant Principal Todd Herman said the purpose was to do something meaningful or serve the community.

"We have 13 different clubs for the fifth and sixth grades and 14 different clubs for the seventh and eighth grades," Herman explained. "This is part of our Leader in Me program, so one day each month we'll run on an alternate schedule where for the first two hours of the day the kids go to their clubs. They picked the top three choices and we held arena signups, and the kids would go to

one and sign up if they had a slot available or move on to their second or third choice."

Among the choices were Media Production, Student Ambassadors, Sunshine Club, Necessities Club, Science Club, IC Marketing Business Club, Technology Assistants, Future Educators, Academic Leaders Club, Multicultural Club, 7 Habits Club, Drama Club, Art Club, Choir Club and Food Cart Club. Herman said each organization will be student-led while teachers will act as mentors and guide them as they establish their goals.

"Every club will have a community outreach program throughout the year and we want them to learn to give back and to be active leaders," he commented. "The goal is for kids to become leaders in their own educational approach. We'll work with them to create their personal mission statements and one of the next steps is next year we'll move into student-led conferences. Parents will

come in and the students will hold the conference and explain their goals in math, English and language arts [and other subjects], then the teachers will work with the students on those goals."

He said the first conference will involve sharing academic and personal goals with parents while a second session in the spring would provide an update on their progress.

Students have been learning the Leader in Me program's "7 Habits of Highly Effective People," from teamwork to being proactive, while the goal is to build academic success, culture and leadership. The Utah-based program is being implemented in all four schools within the Indian Creek Local School District over four years, while more Club Day sessions are set for December.

"Five years from now, we expect issues with attendance, missing work and behaviors will be greatly reduced," Herman said.

## SPEAK

(Continued from Front)

joyed sharing the details of their work to save the endangered species.

"We were nervous but it went well," said Starr. "We discussed the biosecurity measures we have on the juvenile hellbenders. It felt good as a high school team being heard by adults. It feels amazing to be the only public high school to do this."

"Once we got up there, everyone eased into it," added Stevens. She continued that the group practiced beforehand at school and on their way to Columbus. "It's nice to have a conversation with professionals and they took it seriously."

"It was cool," commented Danielson. "It was different than speaking in front of other kids."

"It was nice seeing how interested they were with us," said Ranjith.

Meanwhile, Fluharty said Gilman and McMahon arrive early each day to take care of the salamanders before school. Additionally, Starr, Simpson and Ranjith have worked with Chief while Stevens has been the environmental educator of sorts and Starr has overseen the FFA. Bradley is new to the team having joined this year.

The students regularly clean the tanks, test pH levels of the water, feed the hellbenders and take their measurements, then the data is recorded and submitted to the ODNR and zoo. In turn, they earn 250 work-based learning hours which also goes toward their graduation. Some sophomores are now getting involved so they are ready to take on tasks next year.

"We got involved and got to be part of this," said Gilman. "It's good to hand over the torch."

## ADVISORY

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Store, create business plans and conduct service projects with activities eyed for Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Instructor Bobby Zinsmeister then gave an overview of the performing arts program, saying his theater students have a unique opportunity to earn credit and experience.

"I believe we've really opened students' eyes to options such as corporate theatricality, which is stage lighting to sound. There are two performance-based classes and two tech-based classes," he commented. "Ninety percent of the kids have never performed and a lot have never operated a tool. We do have a fully functioning scene shop and are building a costume library."

Zinsmeister said the Creek Kids Playhouse was launched this fall and children's productions are performed which go towards work-based learning hours. Another installment is set for February and it will be student-led with positions from artistic director to box office manager with other duties to direct, market and build sets for the show. More activities include the upcoming student-directed production of "Night of January 16<sup>th</sup>" in December and the radio play performance of Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol." He noted that both the tech support and interactive media programs have also aided with programs while robotics students were creating projects for performances.

Jennifer Belt also discussed career-based intervention and said it helped students at risk of not graduating. Students attend school for

half a day and then work in the community, while CBI graduation rates have been at 100 percent. Robinson then said her consumer science program taught financial literacy to freshmen and a leadership and community engagement class. This spring, it will lead a college and career readiness event and will help students prepare financing and FAFSA information.

"We get to know kids more than any other teacher can," Moffat also added. "We look at the state's highest paying jobs without degrees and last year we had a senior with an internship that led to a job. Your impact helped a new generation go to work."

Robinson said the CTE instructors met weekly with district CTE Coordinator Dan Hartman and they were looking to add more pathways in the future. Dr. Chappellear thanked the people for supporting the levy to construct new school buildings, saying the updated facilities only enhanced learning for students.

"With the building, we have new programs," he said. "All of our programs were either non-existent or limited and the things they are doing is providing opportunities for kids beyond high school."

The committees broke down into individual sessions with their respective programs and approvals were later given for Future Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) club business with mock interviews on Dec. 18-19 and a CTE Career Kickstart Learning Fair on March 25.

Another advisory board session is eyed for spring.