FIRST LEAPES PROJECT SERVES NEARLY 390 MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS THROUGHOUT KANSAS

Year One of Project LEAPES (Learning, Exploration, and Application for Prospective Engineering Students) was a success, engaging hundreds of students from small and rural/remote schools across the state in new and engaging STEAM experiences. Funded by the Department of Defense National Defense Education Program, we worked collaboratively to bring Kansas stakeholders together with a common goal of getting rural students interested in and excited for STEM careers.

Our Project LEAPES Virtual Summer STEAM Academy was an innovative way to teach Computer Science, Artificial Intelligence, and Aerospace Engineering to students in grades 6-8 across the state. Every day for three weeks in June, about 310 students reported to their local high school and a facilitating teacher assisted them in completing projects explained by highly qualified KSU faculty via Zoom. Participating teachers also received Professional Development on integrating STEM skills into their classes and received over $4,500 of drones and coding robots to use with their classes in the future free of charge. The results were overwhelmingly positive, with many students reporting a newfound

See SUMMER LEAPES, page 2
The Rural Education Center (REC) in Kansas State University’s College of Education (COE) received a three-year Department of Defense grant for nearly $2.7 million designed to help mentor and promote Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) degrees and careers throughout the state. The grant is through the National Defense Education Program in STEM, Biotechnology, and Enhanced Civics Education.

The REC is building upon an established Summer STEM program with Project LEAPES (Learning, Exploration, and Application for Prospective Engineering Students). Project LEAPES provides three phases: an awareness camp for students in grades 7-8, a career exploration phase for grades 9-10, and academic and career preparation for grades 11-12. It is expected to provide summer programming for nearly 3,000 students and 360 teachers. It will also provide opportunities for students in person and through virtual reality and professional learning sessions for teachers during the school year.

Leading LEAPES are Program/Project Coordinator Kevin Colle; REC Director J. Spencer Clark, and REC Assistant Director Lori Goodson, all in the COE Curriculum and Instruction Department. The REC partnered with University of Kansas’ Center for Remote Sensing of Ice Sheets.

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- **Artificial Intelligence - Troy Harding, Chad Bailey, Dr. Michael Pritchard and Tim Bower, KSU Salina Integrated Studies Department**
LEAPING INTO STEM
27 SCHOOLS JOINED K-STATE LEAPES IN YEAR 1

In our grant’s first year, 33 schools in 27 districts throughout Kansas participated. They were:

USD 215 - Lakin (x2)
USD 113 - Prairie Hills (x4)
  Sabetha, Wetmore and Axtell each had classrooms and teachers who received PD
USD 303 - Ness City
USD 379 - Clay County (x3)
  Clay County Community Middle School and Wakefield School each had classrooms and teachers who received PD
USD 320 - Wamego (x2)
USD 411 - Goessel
USD 381 - Spearville
USD 241 - Wallace County
USD 257 - Iola
USD 357 - Belle Plaine (x2)
USD 407 - Russell Co
USD 115 - Nemaha Central
USD 284 - Chase Co
USD 107 - Rock Hills
USD 361 - Chaparral
USD 308 - Hutchinson
USD 298 - Lincoln
USD 223 - Linn
USD 310 - Fairfield
USD 258 - Humboldt
USD 420 - Osage City (x2)
USD 507 - Satanta
USD 309 - Nickerson
Kickapoo Nation School
WORKSHOPS PROVIDE GADGETS, TRAINING FOR TEACHERS

Through workshops held in Salina and livestreamed, 40 teachers received professional development in computer science, artificial intelligence and aerospace engineering.

PD MATERIALS AVAILABLE

For access to the professional development materials from the three workshop topics, please contact Kevin Colle, klcolle@ksu.edu.