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Press Release

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For Immediate Release

Contact:

Sonya Johnson

Sonya.Johnson@ettp.doe.gov

(865) 574-4349

UCOR Awards \$25,000 in Mini-Grants for Area School STEM Projects

Oak Ridge, Tenn., May 21, 2020 – Students in 23 schools across the region will benefit from more than \$25,000 in mini-grants that UCOR is awarding for fund science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) projects. UCOR annually awards these mini-grants to help teachers heighten students' awareness of technical fields.

This year, entries were submitted from an eight-county region. Grants were awarded for 33 projects ranging from *STEM Activities for Kindergarten* to *Toad-ally Awesome Pond Explorations!* to *Exploring Plate Tectonics* (a full list follows the press release). UCOR has awarded close to \$200,000 in mini-grants to local schools since 2012.

Katherine McKee, who teaches 7th and 8th grade science at Midway Middle School in Roane County, is using her grant for a Girl's STEM Club. McKee said receiving the mini-grant reinforced her belief in the importance of STEM education for students, schools, the community, and local industry. "In our Girl's STEM Club, we believe that supporting middle school girls in math and science now will have a lasting and empowering impact on them in their future."

Ligia Boundy, an 8th grade math and algebra 1 teacher at Clinton Middle School, was excited about the grant she received to support her distance learning math tool, IXL. "IXL contains thousands of math problems covering all grade levels K-12 and it allows for independent online skill practice while giving students immediate feedback." She added that the program "...comes with a powerful Analytics component, giving the teacher the tools to monitor student progress and provide individual help as needed."

The mini-grants are an important part of UCOR's community support and workforce development program. UCOR President and CEO Ken Rueter, who is a chemical engineer, noted that STEM education is essential to building a future pipeline of cleanup workers. "We value having a trained, skilled workforce and we know they are the backbone to successfully advancing DOE's mission to complete environmental cleanup across the Oak Ridge Reservation," Rueter said. "We have a significant number of STEM professionals – engineers, industrial hygienists, project managers, chemical operators and others — working with us to turn decades-old environmental hazards into reusable land for the community and to support ongoing DOE missions," he added.

Applications were accepted from teachers during the month of March. A four-person team of UCOR professionals reviewed the submissions (which were made anonymous for the process) and selected the projects for award.

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Photo: JMS_winner_lego_league.jpg

Caption: A 2019 mini-grant winning project, Jefferson Middle School's Lego League

NOTE TO EDITORS: A complete list of grant winners by county follows for your information and use.

Anderson County (5)

- Janis Bishop, Briceville Elementary School, *Future Foundations*
- Chris Hinds, with Jessica Schaus and Montana Pflug, Claxton Elementary School, *Broken Heart*
- Ligia Boundy, Clinton Middle School, *I Excel at Math with IXL*
- Lucy Brooks, Dutch Valley Elementary School, *Extra Extra, Read All About It!*
- Sally Suttle, with Christy Hicks, Grand Oaks Elementary School, *Sprouting in Science*

Campbell County (3)

- Angie Baird, White Oak Elementary, *What's the Problem?*
- Tiffany Logsdon, Wynn Habersham Elementary, *Technology in the Classroom*
- Jaime Walden, Wynn Habersham Elementary, *STEM Activities for Kindergarten*

Knox County (3)

- Timothy Cathcart, Bearden High School, *Cybersecurity Firewall*
- Emily Swearingen, with Emily Brandel and Brian Parton, Farragut High School, *FIRST Robotics Team*
- Bethany Saunders, Hardin Valley Middle School, *Sphero Minis*

Morgan County (3)

- Anthony Boutwell, Petros Joyner Elementary School, *Compute and Conquer*
- Melissa Poland, Petros Joyner Elementary School, *Toad-ally Awesome Pond Explorations!*
- Sarah Stout, with Candy Melton and Stephanie Wright, Petros Joyner Elementary School, *Simple Machines and Motorized Mechanisms*

Oak Ridge Schools (7)

- Lauren Blair, with Heather Henderlight, Glenwood Elementary, *Digital Storytelling for Elementary Students*
- Catheryn Long, with Amelia Bell and Tisha Brown, Glenwood Elementary, *Digging into Geology*
- Jacob Nicely, with Brian Smith, Jefferson Middle School, *The Amazing Astrolabe*
- Janie Shanafield, Jefferson Middle School, *Spiking Interest in Robotics*
- Julie McCullough and Stephanie Sluss, Jefferson Middle School/Robertsville Middle School, *Medical Entomology & Geospatial Analyses*
- Lisa Buckner, Linden Elementary School, *Steaming Ahead & Growing Makers with Cricut Maker & Accessories*
- Christopher Scott, Oak Ridge High School, *Programming Robots with 20/20 Vision*

Oneida Special School District (5)

- Donna Tompkins, with Melissa Cruz, Lora Wilson, and Crystal Jones, Oneida Elementary School, *Shake, Rattle, and Roll*
- Leann Goins, Oneida High School, *Express Your Creativity Through Digital Design*
- Kendra Cross, Oneida Middle School, *Exploring Plate Tectonics*
- Leigh Culver, with Torrey Slaven, Oneida Middle School, *You're Telling me, THAT is inside of ME?!?!*

- Gretchen Stephens, Oneida Middle School, *Owl Pellet Lab Investigation*

Roane County (4)

- Jessica Marasco, with Brandi Clifton, Midway Elementary School, *If You Build It...*
- Katie McKee, Midway Middle School, *The Future is Female*
- Katie McKee, Midway Middle School, *#Cure2025 Genetic Disease PBL*
- Amy Haney, Oliver Springs High School, *Micro Bits on the Move*

Scott County (2)

- Melinda Gibson, Fairview Elementary, *Make The Right Turn*
- Michelle Massengale, with Anita Harness, Fairview Elementary, *Through the Eyes of Young Einsteins.*

Union County (1)

- Paula Deaver, Horace Maynard Middle School, *Aeronautics*

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