

# Superintendent's Highlight of the Week: May 23

S.T.E.A.M. in Focus at POB

Being a former science teacher, science fairs and research projects naturally excite me. This week our schools were moving full S.T.E.A.M ahead -- as the 6th graders at POBMS can attest. Their gymnasium was buzzing with future scientists displaying their projects in an articulate and well informed manner. I learned about the effects of cell phone radiation on the growth of plants, measuring reaction time, the effects of temperature on elasticity, how males and females react to varying factors and many other science explorations. The students were well versed in their topics and their presentations were impressive. Kudos to the POBMS science staff and Mrs. Barry for stimulating inquiring minds!!

On Wednesday, POBJFK's Independent Research Program held their annual Symposium. This is an evening where our students are given the opportunity to share their year-long research with peers, parents, faculty and the community. Select students from grades 9-12 presented a brief synopsis of their findings as well as why they chose their respective areas of research. Topics such as the behavioral patterns of the Lyme disease tick, biofuel, dyslexia, nanotechnology and the relationship between the intake of folic acid during pregnancy and the incidence of autism were presented. A few of these students will present their work at the June 2nd Board of Education meeting.



The POBJFK Independent Research Program is one of the largest and most successful programs in the nation, with 168 students currently enrolled. Our program is *open to all* students who have a passion to explore any area of their personal interest. Our nationally recognized freshman curriculum focuses on developing lifelong skills such as choosing topics, finding reliable sources, meeting deadlines, scientific writing, editing, statistics and presenting. In the sophomore and junior years, the students work in teams to address challenging topics such as environmental issues, emerging future technologies, behavioral studies and math research. Senior year culminates with students writing, submitting and presenting an individual project based upon their experience working in a university research laboratory or completing an in-house project.

As the summer approaches, we bid farewell to our seniors knowing that they leave us well prepared for prestigious colleges and medical/dental programs. The baton is passed to 38 of our underclassmen as they begin their high level summer research. It all builds on what they began to explore in Kindergarten through Middle School here in POB.