

NASA invites Dalton STEM class to pilot program

By ABBY ARMBRUSTER Staff Writer Published: January 14, 2013 4:00AM

DALTON DISTRICT -- The first semester of the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) class has already made leaps and bounds above Dalton Intermediate School (DIS) teacher Laura Grimm's expectations.

On the same day as the STEM open house at DIS, Grimm received an e-mail from NASA to invite Grimm's class to be the guinea pigs for a new project based on work that Grimm's students had done earlier this semester.

"Today, I got an e-mail from NASA asking if our STEM class would pilot a new program for micro-gravity," Grimm said. "They said it's much more technology-based (than what her students had previously done)."

In the first month of this school year, Grimm asked students to ponder what would happen if common toys such as pinwheels, yo-yos and pendulums were in an environment with no gravity.

Students worked in groups to write proposals and diagrams discussing how their toy of choice would react in the anti-gravity environment.

Grimm had originally heard of a program through NASA that would allow students to submit their proposals for feedback from NASA engineers and scientists.

When it came time to turn the projects in, however, Grimm was told that the program was cut.

"They said 'We're sorry, that program's been canceled due to lack of funding,'" Grimm said. "They obviously heard it in my voice how disappointed I was."

Someone at NASA asked Grimm to submit the proposals regardless and then were returned with full-page comments from NASA employees.

"Each group has written comments from NASA engineers," Grimm said. "And then we set up a distance learning opportunity with a physicist from NASA who's up in Cleveland. They were able to hear feedback on their projects; they were able to ask their questions. It was awesome."

Grimm said she has not decided where to go from here with the pilot program, but said she was happy to be approached by the company.

Contact Abby Armbruster at 330-287-1632 or email her at aarmbruster@the-daily-record.com. Follow her on Twitter @abbyarmbruster.