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Micro:bits Make Programming, Coding Fun at LBI Grade School

Tiny multifunctional computers are the focus of a new enrichment class and afterschool club for students at the Long Beach Island Grade School, in Ship Bottom. Micro:bits – which are about the size of a credit card, and low cost – can be programmed and coded to design games and create fun projects.

Micro:bits are “easy to deploy and have wide-ranging capabilities for developing creative technology projects with students ages 8 and up,” school staff explain. “With just a micro:bit and a computer, students

can have programs downloaded and running in minutes.

“Incorporating micro:bits in the classroom can be done through a variety of methods such as integrating physical computing with content areas, afterschool clubs or as part of a technology or design class. With these microcomputers, students apply many critical skills, including problem-solving and logical thinking as well as creating and using algorithms, sequencing, loops, debugging and abstraction.”

Students participating in the class

and the club at the LBI School learn to program their devices using block-based or text-based programs to create physical computing projects. As the staff note, “Students can actually bring coded programs to life through tangible, physical products such as step counters, instruments, arcade games and even remotely-operated temperature sensors.”

The youngsters can also create animations with music, use motors and circuits to operate other devices and work on extension projects with products such as Adafruit, Scratch,

LegoMindstorms, MinecraftEdu and environmental sensors.

Long Beach Island Consolidated School District Superintendent Peter Kopack was excited to share that the school “recently received word from the New Jersey Association of School Administrators in Trenton that our LBI Grade School STEAM Club students will present at the NJASA TechSpo Conference 2023,” a three-day technology training and exhibition held in Atlantic City at the end of January.

Kopack, along with staff members

Cathy McBride, Shelley Smith and Laura Daly, will work with the students to assemble a micro:bit presentation.

“Participants will be able to discover innovative uses of this pocket-sized computer for integrating students’ digital skills in computational thinking and programming within classroom lessons,” said Kopack.

“We are thrilled to have our students make a presentation to school leaders and educators from across the state,” the superintendent remarked. —J.K.-H.