

Advanced technology

3D Printing becomes newest part of RB STEAM

A new piece of equipment in the Red Bird Christian School computer lab has grabbed the students' attention.

A 3D printer, plus five laptop computers, was installed in April and has been used by the 3D Printing class already. This marks the beginning of the new program: RB STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math).

"We're just getting started so we're just printing knick-knacks, key chains and things that the students have picked out from Web sites or file sharing sites," said Jamie Collett, teacher of the class.

Additive manufacturing-3D printing uses computer-aided design (CAD) to create three-dimensional objects through a layering method. The end product comes from a colored filament that is spooled. Blue was the first color used and a University of Kentucky logo was one of the first things to be printed.

Charter Communications provided funds to help start the technology for our students.

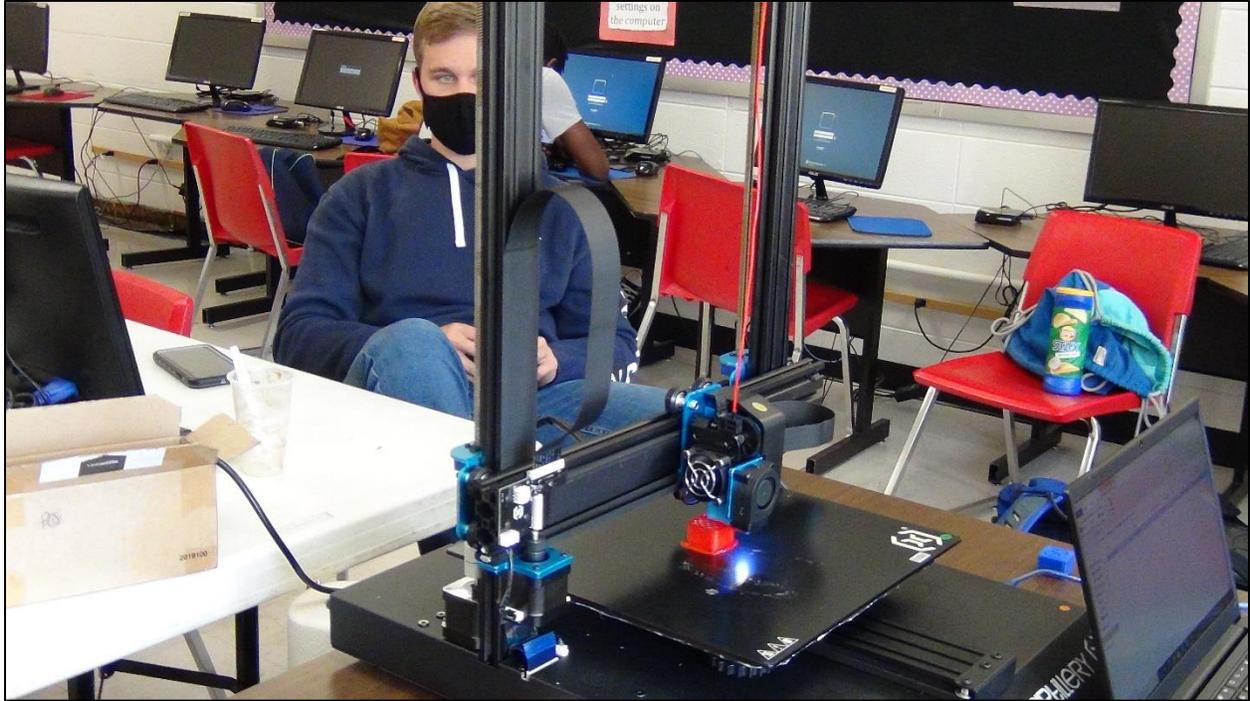
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One of the things the class is working on is getting the correct temperature of the print bed (where the finished product sits). If it's too hot, the printed item won't stay in place. Too cold means it will stick to the bed.

"Right now we want to be like Baby Bear wanting a porridge that's not too hot or too cold, but just right," Mr. Collett said.

Mr. Collett said the school eventually will offer classes to prepare students to take CompTIA (Computing Technology Industry Association) certification exams in Networking, CyberSecurity/networks, equipment operation, energy specialist, patient care/dental assistant.



The 3D printer (ABOVE) creates an object using colored filaments (RIGHT).

The class was scheduled to start in the fall, but this was an example of an instruction that doesn't work as well virtually. The class was also supposed to be a dual credit, but that aspect, as well as the more advanced part of the instruction, will have to wait until next school year.



“We haven't gotten the chance to actually design a product, yet,” Mr. Collett said. “When we have more time next year, we'll learn to design products that are more helpful for them in their day-to-day lives.

“Right now, the students are learning and having fun.”

Charter Communications provided the funds for student technology, yet support is needed to sustain and expand the RB STEAM pathways of vocational/technical education.

“(Charter) gave us a grant for technology here at the school,” Mr. Collett said. “So, we are using it to make sure students have what they need to participate in virtual education as well as expanding our vo-tech program. We certainly thank them for their support.”

To support Red Bird Mission or Red Bird Christian School, click the donation link on our website, www.rbmission.org . You can also call 606-598-3155 for information about other Red Bird Mission programs or call 606-598-2416 for more information about the school.