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MARK MAYES
Magnet Schools Office
(517) 755-2793

STUDENTS LEARN COMPUTER PROGRAMMING THROUGH NEW SEXTON MAGNET PROJECT

MSU, LANSING SCHOOL DISTRICT
PARTNER ON ‘ALICE PROJECT’

Students from Sexton High School’s Math, Science, and Engineering Magnet Academy have been learning high-tech computer programming skills through a new after-school program called the Alice Project.

Sexton students attend the two-hour sessions once a week on Tuesdays, and will showcase their projects during the final session of the fall program series on November 13 from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Students attend the sessions in Room 304 at Sexton High School, 102 S. McPherson Avenue.

The Alice Project is a pilot program offered through a partnership between Sexton Magnet Academy and the Michigan State University Department of Computer Science and Engineering. The Alice Project introduces students to the basics of computer programming by using the Alice 3D Graphics Environment, developed at Carnegie Mellon University. During the sessions, students create characters and design storylines that come to virtual life through a system of drag-and-drop maneuvers. They make their characters interact with one another, build scenes, and implement an entire story line.

Twenty Sexton Magnet Academy students in grades 9 to 12 are participating in the program. Two MSU engineering students have been providing instruction during the weekly sessions, which started on Tuesday, October 16.

The initiative is a preview of the type of programs that will be offered through ITEC (Information Technology Empowerment Center), a business/community partnership designed to teach area youth key science, technology, engineering, and math skills. ITEC is expected to open in 2008 in Lansing’s former Holmes Street School and plans to continue the Alice Project this winter and beyond.

As one of nine Lansing School District schools with magnet programs, Sexton High School offers students in grades nine to 12 themed education focusing on math, science, and engineering. Other magnet programs focus on the visual and performing arts; International Baccalaureate; international studies; free Montessori; and leadership, law, and government.

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