

Eye On Education: Local Students Learn Science From Scientists

BY PAULA EBBEN / WBZ-TV / JANUARY 19, 2015

PLAINVILLE (CBS) – At first glance it looks like your typical 5th grade science class and then the experiments start. At the Wood Elementary School in Plainville the class is being taught by Dr. Audra Kennedy. She has a PhD in neuroscience and works for the non-profit “Science From Scientists.”

The students are instantly engaged, “It’s very entertaining to do. Very interesting, hands-on experiments,” says one eager student.

“Kids need to learn science. Science really is going to be at the forefront of what these students are going to grow up and do for their jobs in life,” explains Dr. Kennedy. And kids can use some help. Just 42% of 8th grade students in Massachusetts scored proficient or higher last year on the science MCAS well behind the math and English exams.

The Boston-based organization pairs up schools with trained scientists to lead classes several times a month throughout the entire school year. “We do a lot of hands-on activities. It’s often expensive to set up all of the activities that we bring with

us for a school system because there are limited budgets,” explains Dr. Kennedy.

The program is the brainchild of MIT graduate Erika Ebbel Angle, “Sometimes science falls by the wayside. And a lot of the schools that we teach there is no science curriculum at all. The challenge is how to do expose the most number of students in the most impactful way.”

Right now “Science From Scientists” is in 27 schools. The waiting list is nearly double that number. The class is paid for through a combination of grants, fundraising, and eventually schools chip in too.

Wood Elementary’s full-time science teacher, William Goulart, sees the added benefit, “It’s that extra hands-on approach I can’t have time all the time in the classroom to do.” And he says classes like these are vital to capture students’ interest early, “if you can capture them now then they will be excited about school and science in particular for the rest of their lives.”

According to Science From Scientists schools using their program have seen a 10-point jump in 5th grade science MCAS scores. But Erika Ebbel Angle says that’s not the real motivation, “at the end you say ‘who wants to be a scientist?’ and all the kids raise their hands. That’s what really motivates us.”



Watch the interview and read the article here <http://boston.cbslocal.com/2015/01/19/eye-on-education-local-students-learn-science-from-scientists/>

Screenshot of the actual news article at <http://boston.cbslocal.com/2015/01/19/eye-on-education-local-students-learn-science-from-scientists/>