Middle-School students see variety of research at One-Day University

Kelly Cannon  Dec 13, 2014

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The best and brightest from Mount Logan Middle school got a hands-on university experience on Friday with the annual One-Day University. The program, which is in its fourth year, takes more than 100 middle school students to Utah State University to attend workshops showing the research opportunities available in higher education.

“The idea was to take the highest-achieving students and give them the campus experience,” said Mike Monson, principal of Mount Logan Middle School. “The workshops will expand on things they already know. Most of these kids can get A’s without really trying to. This challenges them to go beyond that. It’s really awesome.”

The four workshops included projects in anthropology, geographic information systems, DNA extraction and technology. Monson said that USU professors and students are often very appreciative of the kids and are surprised by what the students already know.

“These kids come away with a vision of the future,” Monson said. “These kids are going to be
working in jobs that aren’t invented yet. It’s up to them to go out and explore.”

Monson said an additional perk of having the students come to the campus is they’re able to be more open about being smart.

“Hopefully the kids feel honored, because it’s not always cool to be smart in middle school,” Monson said. “They are able to ask questions without their classmates scoffing at them.”

The geographic information systems workshop was hosted by Peter Howe, an assistant professor in environment and society. He explained that the workshop would explore sea level rise and different levels of the sea.

“This is a basic introduction to geographic information system problems, and they’ll use Google Earth,” Howe said.

Howe added that he believes the One-Day University is a good way to show middle school students what university students do.

“It shows the cool problems and issues that they can research and work on,” Howe said.