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IBM Engineer Gets Students to “Flip” for Engineering



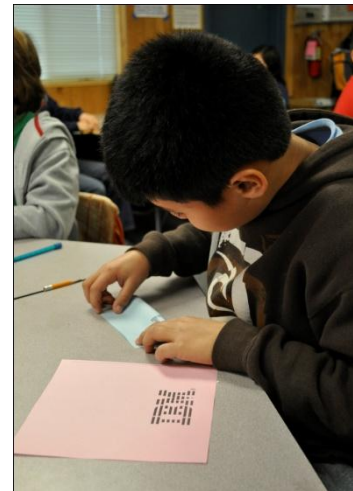
BEAVERTON, OR—Karen Harger’s 5th grade class at Vose Elementary School laughed and cheered during their classroom engineering competition led by IBM Software Engineer, Jim Keniston. As part of National Engineers Month, Keniston introduced the students to engineering career possibilities with a hands-on activity and short presentation on what engineering is all about.

Keniston instructed the class on how to make simple paper structures called “paper-saults” (because of their ability to perform a summersault), then challenged the group to create the fastest one possible using different sized paper, paper clips, pennies, and cotton balls.

Two attempts at the competition allowed the students to experiment and collaborate with one another. While only one group of students got to say they won the competition, all of the students came away with real-life engineering principles.

“Engineers take a product and try to make it better: faster, smaller, or easier to use,” Keniston told the students during his presentation. “Today, you all did that! You used problem solving [engineering] to make the paper-sault go faster.”

“I love to see them think outside of the box,” said Mrs. Harger, who has invited an engineer to her classroom for the past several years. “This is the type of project that will inspire some of the students to study math and science more as they progress through school.”



National Engineers Month (February) is orchestrated by the **Business Education Compact**, a local non-profit organization dedicated to “make learning real” for Oregon and SW Washington students. In its 17th year, the program has enabled more than 325,000 students to have the privilege of interacting with a real engineer in their classroom.

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