

Camp Connect

In June, 96 elementary students attended **Camp Connect** at Smith Elementary. The two-week camp focused on STEM exploration activities with LEGOS, soccer skills with the YMCA, social-emotional connections through read-alouds, and digital content creation with Adobe Spark. Campers were greeted each morning with a Connect pep rally which included dancing and singing. Students were divided into color teams and rotated through the day with their teacher. Camp kicked off with the read aloud, "We Are All Wonders!" by R.J. Palacio to set the tone. Everyone at camp adopted the "Fill-Your-Bucket" mantra to lift each other up throughout the week after reading "Have You Filled a Bucket Today?" by Carol McCloud. Students designed Corbel bridges, motorized Ferris Wheels, and pullback cars out of Legos to explore concepts of force and motion. YMCA instructors led students through a skill-based soccer clinic designed to help students increase strength, balance, coordination, and cardio through play. A regular classroom was transformed into the "Wonder Room" where students asked questions and conducted research to find the answers. Students used Adobe Spark on iPads to create graphics, videos, and digital portfolios to share the outcome of their inquiry.



Connect Family Events

JUNE

In June, the Connect team hosted **Camp Read-A-let** which was a virtual camp out...IN! Using a virtual campground created on Thinglink, families arrived at base camp and moved from tent to tent. The “tents” were individual Zoom rooms that hosted camping themed read alouds, sing-alongs, and other activities such as a baby opossum and the Critter Crew from the Texas Wildlife Rehabilitation Coalition Wildlife Center and a “Tales and Tails” presentation from the Houston Museum of Natural Science about real animals from around the world that appear in popular children’s books.



JULY

In July, the Connect Family Event “Discover STEM and SOAR!” was a huge success! Families were invited to step into our learning lab and participate in hands-on STEM stations, enjoy an exciting and interactive live presentation from the Mad Scientist, and gather to listen to STEM-themed read alouds such as “The Most Magnificent Thing” by Ashley Spires and “What Do You Do with A Chance?” by Kobi Yamada. The entire night was about building community and inspiring families to learn together. The Lamar Educational Awards Foundation (LEAF) sponsored the event and students were able to shop for four books to add to their home library.



AUGUST

The Connect summer ended with the “Celebrate Future Leaders” Connect Family Event. We partnered with our friends at Fluor Cares, Real Hope Community Church, and the YMCA to host an event designed to include literacy, enrichment activities, family engagement, and more! Families connected while playing board games, eating dinner provided by Real Hope Church, participating in back-to-school themed read alouds from the Connect team and special guests, animal yoga with the YMCA, live performances of Tacky the Penguin with Books Alive!, STEM activity stations, and the LEAF Choice Books Shopping experience. The experience was made complete for students as they shopped for back to school supplies at the Fluor Cares School Supply store. Beyond creating an event that offered unique learning experiences for our families, this Connect event allowed us to celebrate the community spirit of LCISD and show our appreciation to the families and community members that make up our great district!

