

SCHOOL

Forrestdale School expands its career-readiness program

RUMSON — Look out “Shark Tank.” More Rumson students than ever will be taking on the challenges of starting a business this fall. This school year marks the third year Forrestdale School will be offering the award-winning TREP\$ program.

TREP\$, short for entrepreneurs, incorporates New Jersey’s required career-readiness practices to teach kids the basics of small business ownership. It culminates with an event-based “pop-up” marketplace where the students launch their businesses for a real profit or loss. With only 20 participants two years ago, swelling to 70 students last year, the entrepreneurship education curriculum will further expand to reach 120 children at Forrestdale School this year.

Maureen Gordon, Gifted and Talented and Enrichment teacher for grades 3-8, first

brought the hands-on project-based learning program to the school in 2017. After learning how TREP\$ had been used with over 30,000 students in over 100 New Jersey schools, she decided to test the waters with a small pilot group of students. “I wanted to try it because it looked like a great way to help make kids career-ready and to think beyond the classroom,” Gordon explained.

The 2017 implementation was a success, as evidenced by the overwhelming support by students and parents alike. Soon after, parents began asking district administrators how their children could also participate and the decision was made to expand the program in 2018. The option to enroll was extended to students in grades

6-8, as an elective during their lunch and recess time. The number of participants more

regular school day, and every fifth-grader will participate in the workshops.

Gordon credits the popularity of the offering to its innate ability to motivate students. The teacher commented, “What continues to surprise me is how they take the experience much farther than I originally planned. They are comparison shopping for supplies, advertising on social media, creating commercials, and even finding “influencers” to use their products. The motivation is incredible.”

From a teaching perspective, Gordon appreciates TREP\$ for its natural fit with STEM and “makerspace” initiatives. “As they create their

products for the TREP\$ Marketplace, students are using the design process, identifying problems, brainstorming solutions, testing, and refining the entire way.” Popular products created in past years included fabric chromebook covers with the school logo, slime with a surprise inside, and a fabric device to keep mobile device cords from getting tangled.

The series of workshops will kick-off this month, and the TREP\$ Marketplace is strategically scheduled for Dec. 12 to allow for holiday shopping. The public is cordially invited to this event where the emerging biz kids will launch their businesses, putting their plans to the ultimate test before a cash-carrying audience of shoppers. “What I am looking forward to most is seeing the outside-of-the-box products the kids come up with,” Gordon added.



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than tripled. This year, TREP\$ will be incorporated into the

STEM initiatives.

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