

INAUGURAL ISSUE

Spring 2018

ACCESS

LAUNCH

THE VOICE OF VIRTUAL LEARNING IN MISSOURI

LAUNCH YOUR SUMMER

70+ courses to keep your
students learning year-round

Log In, Work Out

How hundreds of Missouri students
are earning PE credit online

He Said, She Said

Member Districts share how Launch is
enhancing online learning across the state

Introducing: **Launch**

Virtual course access for Missouri students, designed, developed and delivered by Missouri educators.

What is Launch?

Launch is Missouri's virtual school that was created as a solution for our state's course access issues. We understand that all Missouri school districts are not able to offer students equal course offerings, so we made it our goal to create top-notch courses online and make them available to districts statewide. Launch's digital development and curriculum departments partner to create online courses that are built to Missouri Learning Standards and delivered to online learners by the highest quality Missouri educators. Launch is partnered with schools across the state and serves the needs of thousands of Missouri students.

Where can I learn more?

Our website, fueledbylaunch.com, is the best way to quickly learn more about who we are and what we offer. You'll find a full list of current course offerings as well as courses in the development process, and you can even view sample assignments. We can also send a couple of Launch team members to your district to talk to your leaders and see how we can help your students with course access issues. If you have specific questions you can't find online or would like to set up an appointment, you can contact our Marketing and Engagement Manager, Savannah Waszczuk, at 417-523-0417 or savannah@fueledbylaunch.com.

Launch: **Three Ways to Learn**

Launch delivers courses multiple ways to meet the needs of all Missouri learners.



Traditional Virtual

Launch's traditional virtual courses are perfect for those students who are looking to build flexibility into their schedules or take courses that aren't traditionally offered in their districts. Traditional Virtual courses are NCAA and MSHSAA approved and start and stop with our traditional calendar.



Credit Recovery

If a student has failed a class, they're eligible to make it up online with our Credit Recovery offerings. Credit Recovery offers Missouri learners a way to makeup credit with courses that are MSHSAA approved and have the benefit of flexible start dates. Priority standards are assessed at 80% mastery.



Credit Acquisition

What happens when students want to enroll in classes six weeks into the semester? They can start right away with our Credit Acquisition courses! Credit Acquisition is designed for students who transfer or re-enter during a semester and offers credit with a pass or fail grade. Students get full course content with flexible course dates.

Staff Poll

If you could take any online course this summer, what would it be and why?

The Launch Team

Dr. Ben Hackenwerth

Executive Director, Innovation and Information

I'd take a virtual course on human-centered design. We use this sort of methodology in our daily work, and I'd like to deepen my understanding of this creative process.

Dr. Nichole Lemmon

Director, Blended Learning

I would love a Parenting 101 class. Someone has to have all the answers, right?!

Allison Saylor

Administrative Assistant

I would love a course that would teach me fun new recipes to cook fair foods, fried foods and other delicious concoctions.

Creative Services

Savannah Waszczuk

Marketing and Engagement Manager

I'd take a snow-climbing class so I could climb Denali. For our final, we'd travel to Alaska and attempt to summit North America's tallest mountain!

Jared Chester

Digital Designer and Support Specialist

I would take Ornithology because I love standing at the window and watching the Launch office pigeons, Mac and Cheese.

Dan McDonald

Videography and Photography

I'd love to take a World Soccer class if given the chance. I'm a huge soccer fan, and I'd love to learn more about historic players and clubs and how they've influenced the modern game.

Walker Smith

Videography and Photography

I would take a class on Fashion Design. I've been watching *Project Runway* a lot lately, and I'd like to be able to understand the things Tim Gunn is talking about.

Development

Amelia Horras

Coordinator, Online Learning

I would take Japanese. When else could I learn the language? Then I'd treat myself with a trip to Japan... or (more likely) a Japanese steakhouse. Either would suffice.

Dr. Meghan Roe

Quality Assurance Specialist

I'd take Film as Literature I. I love to watch movies and talk about them later—this course lets me do both!

Nicki Dickson

Senior Digital Developer

I would like to take our Fine Arts Appreciation II course. I love art, and it's fascinating to understand the underlying meaning of each piece of work.

Linda Ayres

Senior Digital Developer

I would take Launch's Film as Literature II course because I love watching and analyzing movies.

Justin Thomas

Senior Digital Developer

I would like to take any of our Spanish courses so I could brush up on my Spanish fluency.

Brad Maples

Digital Developer

I would take our Japanese course, as I'm a big anime fan and would love to understand more of the Japanese language.

Jarvis Walton

Digital Developer

I would take Earth Science—to learn about volcanoes and oceans, and to be able to complete the labs, would be really fun.

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WHY I LAUNCH

This Yale-bound senior loves zoology, volunteering and learning online.

SUCCESS STORIES

Meet Rebecca Lewis, a former high school dropout who graduated with the help of Launch's online courses.

Photos by Lucas Fritch Photography; Daniel McDonald; Walker Smith



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Why Launch? In Lebanon, the answer is to empower learners and prepare them for the future.



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“Our staff believes in the power of ‘yes’ and finding solutions, regardless of barriers.”

Dr. Nichole Lemmon

Director's **Note**

Launch's Director shares the vision for *Access Launch* magazine and our goal of providing course access to all Missouri students.

Welcome to *Access Launch*! As a developer and advocate of virtual learning for more than five years, I have often struggled with making the invisible elements of online instruction visible. That is the goal of this publication. *Access Launch* was created to tell the stories of the students, educators and districts we have the privilege to

partner with across the state of Missouri. *Access Launch* will also highlight our most most-popular classes and upcoming courses to give readers an in-depth look at how Launch courses are developed. Page after page and issue after issue, *Access Launch* hopes to help readers understand the huge role that online courses play in the future of Missouri education.

What I am most excited to share in each issue of *Access Launch* are the individual success stories of students who have found a path through Launch virtual courses that would have otherwise been unattainable. Our staff believes in the power of “yes” and finding solutions, regardless of barriers. On p. 22 you'll meet Becca Lewis, a high school dropout who found a new path thanks to Launch courses. Becca inspires us to continue this important work, because all students deserve choices and options that meet their individual needs.

We will see you online,

Dr. Nichole Lemmon
Director of Blended Learning



Launch Letters

You talk, and we listen! Read on to see a few of the latest notes we've received from Launch teachers, liaisons and students.

Teacher Talk

Thank you for offering me the opportunity to teach the reading online classes for this summer. I am really enjoying English II online—I have developed a positive relationship with several of the kiddos, which I did not think could happen when you don't see a student face to face. I believe we are off to a great start.

Janice L. Clark

English/Language Arts Teacher
Kickapoo High School, Springfield

Ms. Clark joins a team of 57 (and growing) Launch educators who are Missouri certified and meet DESE highly qualified status. We train our teachers on how to build culture in the online classroom. Launch often has adjunct educator positions available, and teachers of Launch member districts are eligible to apply to teach for us.—Editor



Signed, Sealed Delivered

I finished proofing these. They look good. Thanks for the rush. We will have them on display tonight for our state of the district event.

Dr. Bob Dillion

Director of Innovative Learning
District of University City

This note came from Dr. Bob Dillion after he approved the Launch course catalog that we designed for the University City School District (pictured above). We offer all Launch member districts free custom marketing to share with their students.—Editor

Student Success Story

Hi, my name is Caleb. I've spent my whole educational career up to this point in a small Christian private school. What I mean by small is the whole school is twenty students. Jumping into this semester is a huge thrill for me. Thank you so much for the assistance along the way, and I hope to be able to make you and the faculty proud with my achievements. Oh! Also, I really love extra-credit because it allows me to jump ahead, even when I'm already giving 110 percent.

Caleb

Launch, ACT Prep Student
Reeds Spring High School

Caleb is a first-semester Launch student who took our ACT Prep class online. Our ACT class prepares students to take both the verbal (English, Reading and Writing) and Mathematics and Science Reasoning sections of the exam. Many students take our prep class directly before they take the exam to boost their score.—Editor

IT is on it!

Thanks so much for working with your IT department to get our students' document accessibility fixed. I appreciate you!

Jen Chase

School Counselor
Carl Junction High School

Ms. Chase wrote this note to our Digital Learning Coordinator, Amelia Horras, after she helped solve an IT issue. Launch provides districts with turn-key access to high-quality courses, and we offer 7-day-a-week technical support from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. to immediately solve any problems that do arise. Support is provided via a call desk or online support, depending on the preference of the student.—Editor

Contact Us

Do you want to learn more about how Launch can help your district and students with course access issues? Are you already a Launch member, and you want to share your experience with our magazine readers? We would love to hear from you! Contact savannah@fueledbylaunch.com with all questions, comments or visit requests.

Superintendent's Note

Meet Springfield Public Schools Superintendent Dr. John Jungmann, and learn his motivation for pioneering Launch.

Collaboration and serving the needs of all students is at the heart of public education, and that focus has never been more important than it is today. As districts search for ways to meet course access needs for all students, virtual course opportunities are frequently the solution. Launch was developed to incorporate the best parts of Missouri public education: our passion for meeting the diverse needs of each student, our mission of delivering curriculum aligned to Missouri Learning Standards and our commitment to utilizing highly qualified Missouri teachers.

Summer offers a great entry point to virtual learning. Students in grades 1–12 can take advantage of more than 70 Launch courses designed to keep

students learning outside of the traditional school year. These virtual courses provide families with flexibility and options during the summer months. And the best part—Launch's online courses are not just computer modules like many of the off-the-shelf vendors; each Launch course comes with a fully certified Missouri teacher, and class sizes are controlled with small teacher-student ratios.

We are excited to continue to partner across Missouri to provide high-quality virtual courses, and we look forward to your collaboration.



Dr. John Jungmann
Superintendent



Dr. John Jungmann

“As districts search for ways to meet course access needs for all students, virtual course opportunities are frequently the solution.”



By the Numbers

Explore the fascinating numbers that sum up Launch's world of online learning.

1 IN 14

MISSOURI PUBLIC
SCHOOL DISTRICTS
USE LAUNCH



57 Launch Teachers



NO STUDENTS
HAVE ACCESS TO
LAUNCH COURSES

115,737



76

LAUNCH
COURSES

20

NEW COURSES
FOR SUMMER
2018



94 HOURS OF
**TECHNICAL
SUPPORT**
PER WEEK

Fall 2017 Launch Students Completed:

10,064

Assignments



3,552

Media Recordings

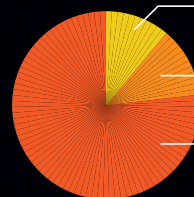


2,591

Discussion Topics



Three Delivery Methods



11% Credit Acquisition

12% Credit Recovery

77% Traditional Virtual

Meet & Greet with Maggi

Meet Maggi Eighmy, a 17-year-old Branson High School junior who enjoys photography, volunteering and learning online.

Access Launch: What Launch classes have you taken?

Maggi Eighmy: I took personal finance, ACT Prep and Psychology of the Holocaust last semester—Fall 2017.

Access: Great! What did you think of taking those classes online?

M.E.: Having online classes allowed me to get ahead and get additional credits under my belt, so that's really awesome. Also, I learned that one of the classes I took, Psychology of the Holocaust, we don't have here anymore, so it's really neat that I could still take it online. An advantage of getting to take all of these classes online is that I could do them within my own time. So, let's say I had a tennis match at the end of the day or I left school early to go to Ozark for a tennis match—I could do my work when I got home or when I had time and was not stressing about something else. I felt a lot more like a college student.

Access: You mentioned tennis—do you play on the school team? What else are you involved in?

M.E.: Yes, I play both soccer and tennis for Branson High School. I'm also in National Honor Society, and I'm vice president of our environmental club. Right now we're working on getting a grant from the high school to put recycling bins, like actual bins instead of cardboard boxes, in every single classroom. We're also partnering with Crayola—we're going to collect used markers and Sharpies and, instead of just throwing them away, we will send them to Crayola, and they'll reuse them.

Access: Wow, you're busy! What are your hobbies outside of school?

M.E.: Photography is definitely a hobby. Also, I like to be active, so I'm outside and running a lot—I'll go running with my sister. I'm

involved with my church a ton, so just being at church and hanging out. I'm also a volunteer there, so I help out where I can. I intern with my youth group.

Access: What social media do you use?

M.E.: Instagram, because I have a photography account on there that gets me in touch with other photographers. Creativity and inspiration come from that. Then I have my main account, and I have that just to keep in touch with friends that have moved away or even that are still here.

Branson student Maggi Eighmy works on her Launch courses during breaks in her day.

Photos by Daniel McDonald; Walker Smith



Access: What about Facebook? Do kids even use that anymore?

M.E.: I don't think so. I deactivated mine, probably, five years ago.

Access: How about Twitter, do you tweet?

M.E.: I got it for a day because we had free ice cream day—if you reposted something, you'd get free ice cream. So I reposted it and then deleted the app.

Access: Do you have your college plans decided yet?

M.E.: I probably won't do an in-state school. We're thinking of a few colleges in Oklahoma. My dad graduated from OU so I was thinking about going to OU, or maybe another neighboring college in a different state.

Access: What about after college, do you have any career ideas?

M.E.: I was thinking about going into the law field—I want to be a lawyer. Preferably criminal law or forensics law.

Access: What's your favorite subject?

M.E.: Math

Access: And while we're on favorites—what's your favorite website?

M.E.: Tumblr. I like to look at posts—there's a lot of memes and a lot of fun stuff that's relatable. Then, people post aesthetically pleasing stuff on there, too, and I get photography ideas. So I really like it just for creativity.

Access: Favorite TV shows?

M.E.: I watch *Twin Peaks*, and then I also watch *Stranger Things* and *Game of Thrones*.

Access: Favorite or most-used emoji?

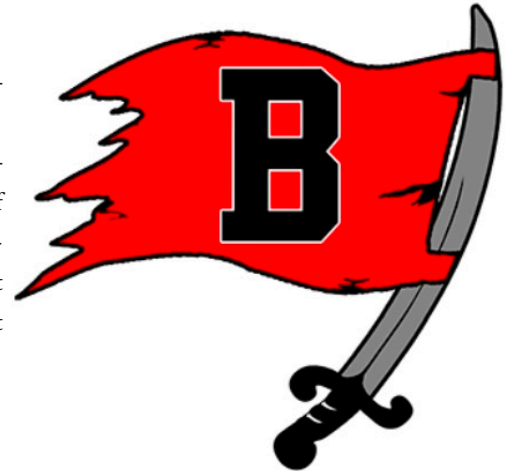
M.E.: That laughing face that's half crying—that's probably mine. It's relatable.

Access: When you consider all of the Launch classes you've taken, what was your favorite Launch experience?

M.E.: In *Psychology of the Holocaust*, my teacher gave me an extra credit assignment at the end of the course. It was to watch *Schindler's List*, which is kind of deep and heavy, but that was probably my favorite thing I did in that course. At first, I was like, 'Ooh, I don't want to watch a black and white,' but it ended up being really valuable, I think.

Access: That's good to hear. You mentioned your teacher—talk more about that. What was the student-teacher interaction like in your Launch classes?

M.E.: The teachers are pretty easy to talk to, and you can interact with them. I felt that even though I couldn't always directly talk to them, like you can't talk to them the way you can talk to them in school, they were all still very involved with us and very engaged with us. They'd have online conferences, and they were all nice.



Access: What would you say to another student who was considering taking a Launch course?

M.E.: I had a girl in my bible study who was thinking about being in one class here at school and then doing the rest online, and I really encourage it. If you're struggling, or you want to do part time at a college or something—it's really a great program, and you can fit it into your day however you need to. And I did learn a ton through my courses, especially ACT prep. They did a lot of online tests, and I watched my ACT score go from like a 24 to a 28.

Access: That's great news! Is there anything else you want to share about Launch?

M.E.: Just that I would encourage it. It's a really good program, and I think that it helped me grow as a person, too. Also, it prepares you for the future. Some classes in college—my sister struggled with this—some of her classes are online, and she didn't know how to work the system or anything. So it helps with that. Also, you have conference calls and stuff, so it helps with that as well—you still gain people skills and that kind of thing. It doesn't limit that at all. ■



Have Tech, Will Travel

Launch World Geography teacher Scott Hardwicke shares his passion for online learning and how he teaches Missouri students while traveling the globe.

One of the reasons why I teach geography is because my parents got me to fall in love with history. Every summer, my dad would pack up the car, and we would drive to a corner of the United States and stop at every historical monument or site along the way. By the time I graduated high school, my mom and dad had taken me to 49 states and eight countries. Going to college, I was like, ‘Why wouldn’t I want to tell people about this?’

At this point, I travel to a new country every year. I still go and try to see as much of the world as I can, and teaching for Launch has allowed me to continue to be able to do this. A lot of teachers teach summer school because they need the money—I can teach online, and it still lets me still go overseas. I can teach, and I can still go and travel.

“I’d get up in the morning in Kathmandu, sip coffee and conference with students in Missouri.”



Last summer, Launch teacher Scott Hardwicke taught Missouri students from Nepal.

Last spring I was in Nepal, in the Himalayas, teaching. I went on a mission trip, and my classes overlapped by about three or four days. I’d get up in the morning in Kathmandu, sip coffee and conference with students in Missouri. It was the most bizarre thing, like, ‘Yeah, I’m 12,000 miles away right now, teaching you guys online!’ One summer I taught the first two days of online geography in France.

Online also lets me teach so many different types of kids. Sure, some people would say that online is not for everybody and that there are kids who try online and they’re not successful, but you know what, there are also kids who try traditional classes and are not successful. I see a lot of successes in online classes. I have kids who are working full time and trying to get their degrees. I have kids with kids. I’ve also had several International Baccalaureate (IB) students—IB is a very

demanding, rigorous program—and those kids need more time in their days. It is a different pace for them. Online really fits so many kids. I have online kids who go to Ivy League schools, and I have online kids who are working part time to provide for their family. Online works for a lot of types of students. ■



Scott Hardwicke
Online Teacher

Home District: Springfield R-XII

Degree: Social Studies

Years Taught: 12 years

Favorite Subject: World Geography

Fun Fact: When Scott is not teaching and traveling, he spends time with his wife and son and leads worship at his church, Hill City, in Springfield.





Behind the **Scenes**

To share a glimpse of life in the Launch offices, we followed Launch Design and Support Specialist Jared Chester for a day.

celebrates every time a new school district becomes a member, and it always includes a bell ring.

7:32 a.m.: Two minutes after Jared sits down to officially start the work day, the phone rings. “Fueled by Launch, this is Jared.” It’s a Launch student, and she can’t log in to Canvas. “Have you made sure you’re in the right place? Let’s check your ID number.” Jared walks the online learner through her tech issues—each week, he spends approximately half of his working hours helping Launch teachers, district liaisons and students solve their computer-related problems.

9:35 a.m.: Two hours and four tech-related phone calls later, Jared opens Adobe InDesign to drop the Marshfield Bluejays logo on the front of the district’s summer custom marketing catalog. “After I drop this, it’s ready for proof.” Jared is also the design guru in charge of all of Launch’s branding, and he’s responsible for designing the free custom marketing we offer to all member districts.

11:15 a.m.: “Yes, the course work prepares students to take the written portion of the driving exam.” Jared is on the phone again, this time explaining Launch’s Driver Education class to a potential district partner—they called and asked how we offer Driver Education online. “They are required to journal about themselves driving, or if they only have a permit, they journal about driving with a parent or guardian.”

12:33 p.m.: The sound of a bell ringing echoes throughout the office. Jared starts to clap, and Launch’s Director Dr. Nichole Lemmon makes an announcement. “Aurora just sent in their MOU—they’re our 40th member district!” The Launch team

1:00 p.m.: Jared walks to the snack area, fills a Dixie cup to the brim with Chex Mix and then walks to sit back down at his desk. “What? I didn’t eat lunch.”

1:45 p.m.: After grabbing a Granny Smith apple from his backpack, Jared heads down to the parking garage. It’s time for his two-mile walk, which he does during his “lunch break.”

3:15 p.m.: Jared adds Launch’s new Physical Education I course to the course listings page on fueledbylaunch.com. He is the one who updates the Launch website.

4:03 p.m.: After sending one last email, Jared packs up his computer and heads home for the day. “See you tomorrow, guys. Have a good night!” ■



We've Got **Game**

This summer, first- through eighth-grade students who attend Launch partner district schools will have access to newly developed coding academies.

Technology is the way of the future, and computer science curriculum is in high-demand. That's why exposure to it—especially at an early age—is crucial. Using Tynker as a third-party ancillary, Launch's coding academies were developed to provide students learning opportunities delivered with a game-like approach. Each academy comes with a teacher, and they are arranged into three grade levels: grades 1–3; grades 4–5 and grades 6–8. “Overall, I feel our coding academies give students a good background into coding and coding terminology,” says Launch Senior Developer Justin Thomas. Read on to learn more.



Grades 1–3:

Early learners have the opportunity to get a taste of computer coding with a puzzle-like approach. “This course takes the difficult aspects of writing code and breaks them into more of a drag-and-drop, picture-based process,” Thomas says. “I feel that it provides young learners a good introduction to both Canvas and taking online courses in a fun and engaging way.”



Grades 4–5:

Students in fourth and fifth grade start the coding academy with a pre-test that determines their subject knowledge and places them on a beginner or intermediate path. These students are encouraged to collaborate on their favorite course aspects and challenges through online discussions. By using a block-coding approach, students are able to build more custom content.



Grades 6–8:

Middle school students who take coding academy share their favorite aspects of lab assignments with their instructors, and their instructors move their completed work to a Tynker showcase. “The students have access to see each others’ games, and they provide constructive feedback to their peers,” Thomas says. By the end of the course, the students write their own video games. ■

Log in, Work Out

Take a deeper look at Launch Physical Fitness, a course that's helping hundreds of Missouri students earn their physical education credit online.

Any time we share our Launch course catalog with someone new, one question pops up more than any other: "Students can take physical fitness online?" And our answer is always yes.

"Physical Fitness is one of our most popular online classes—especially in the summer," says Dr. Nichole Lemmon, Launch's Director of Blended Learning. The course also allows students to workout the way they want to workout—in addition to learning modules and lessons, the students participate in physical activity that is tracked by a Garmin HR

Activity Tracker. "The watches monitor the students' heart rates,"

Dr. Lemmon says. "They have to keep their heart rates elevated for so many minutes per day."

There are two versions of Launch's Physical Fitness class, and

each consists of six units and 60 hours of course work. They both require students to complete 32 hours of course assignments and 28 hours of physical activity. "Students have to write essays about their personal fitness and relate them to what they're learning in class," says Launch Senior Digital Developer Nicki Dickson. "They also have to create videos to show they can physically apply what they have learned. They have to answer activity questions to prove they know the theory behind it all, and they have to participate in class discussions to gain perspectives from their classmates."

When it comes to the types of workouts students can perform, the sky's the limit. "If a student plays a sport for the school and the coach approves, the student can wear their Garmin and workout during practice," Dickson says. "We've

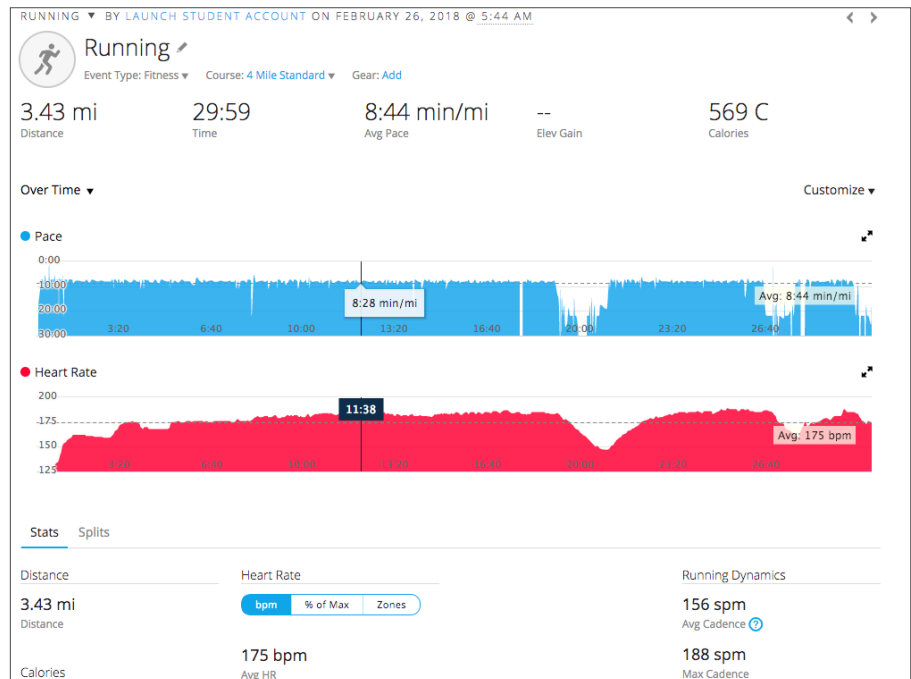
In Launch's Physical Fitness course, the Garmin Connect app shares the students' fitness data with teachers.

had students wear their heart rate monitors during marching band or while mowing the lawn for their parents."

The technology is simple for students. "The student needs to start a workout on the watch, complete the activity, stop and save and then sync

with the Garmin Connect program," Dickson says. "Most students download the Garmin Connect app on their smartphones. The activities automatically sync when the Garmin and phone are near each other." If a student doesn't have a smartphone, they sync with a computer.

After completing the course, the students have a better understanding of physical fitness and the choices they need to live healthy lifestyles—and a few lucky parents have newly mowed lawns. ■



A Vision for **Success**

By offering Launch courses, the Lebanon School District works to fulfill its mission to “Inspire a passion of learning through positive relationships, personalized experiences and a focus on the future.”

Lebanon High School Assistant Principal, Jaymes Wapp, and Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Jay Roth, discuss how Launch provides opportunities for many types of students.

“One of the reasons we pursued Launch was in pursuit of flexibility for students’ schedules.”

—Jay Roth



Stay true to your vision. This ideology drives the leadership team at Lebanon High School (LHS), and it also acted as a motivator in the district’s decision to join Launch in Summer 2017. “Our vision is to be an adaptive learning community that empowers all learners with the knowledge, skills and dispositions to be ready for their futures,” says Jay Roth, Director of Curriculum & Instruction at Lebanon R-III School District.

So, what does empowering learners mean? In Lebanon, it means offering an expansive course catalog with a plethora of core classes and extracurriculars. It means meeting students at their current learning levels and helping

them progress. It means meeting non-traditional students’ needs by allowing them to enroll in courses at any point. They’re able to meet these goals even better thanks to a partnership with Launch.

For example, LHS utilizes Launch’s Credit Recovery offerings, which is a benefit appreciated by High School Counselor, Dan Pitts. “Sometimes it takes them a little bit more to figure out what it takes to be a good student,” Pitts says. “Sometimes this requires a second opportunity in a course in which they didn’t succeed the first time. Like all high schools, LHS wants to provide opportunities for students to stay on track for graduation. Launch’s Credit Recovery is another option for those students.”

According to Lebanon High School Assistant Principal, Jaymes Wapp, that’s one of the things that really sets Launch apart. “The credit recovery program we once used was a national program,” Wapp says. “With Launch, it’s taught by Missouri teachers and is designed from state standards here in Missouri.” This helps prevent students from seeing all-new content when they’re trying to make up a class. One LHS rapid-response intervention program that uses the Launch Credit Recovery option is Night School, which is offered to students who failed a course during the previous semester.

Wapp continues by saying Launch allows LHS staff to provide students a second opportunity to engage. “In most

cases, Launch allows our teachers to enroll students in the same Credit Recovery course they failed as a seated traditional course,” he says.

While Launch’s Credit Recovery offerings provide one option for students, the school also has multiple high-flyer students who use Launch to build flexibility into their schedules. “My favorite thing about Launch is the flexibility,” says Jaessa Brown, a 16-year-old junior who is currently enrolled in Launch’s English III, Fine Arts Appreciation and Personal Finance courses. Brown first tried Launch courses seeking an alternative to seated courses.

She currently dedicates much of her time to an early childhood education course, which takes more than half of her daily schedule. “This works better for me,” Brown says. As she’s two semesters in, she’s also found the perfect formula for balancing her Launch course work with other activities. “I volunteer with kids a lot when I’m here, so after that I can go home and do my homework at my own pace,” Brown says. “Also, I have a job, so it works well. I can work my Launch classes around my job. It’s awesome for time management. It has really

taught me how to manage my time and not to slack off with homework.”

Launch is able to offer all Lebanon students more flexibility. “We offer an arsenal of courses in our handbook already, and yet there was some expansion that would be allowed for us, and for our students, if we were able to have Launch courses in our traditional-virtual world,” Roth says. Launch also allows Lebanon students to take courses they couldn’t formerly fit in their school days. “One of the reasons we pursued Launch was in pursuit of flexibility for students’ schedules,” Roth says.

Brown isn’t the only Lebanon student who enjoys taking Launch’s Traditional Virtual courses, and according to Pitts, she will soon have even more company. “We are changing our culture,” Pitts says. “We’re changing the culture of our student body. I really foresee Launch continuing to grow. Kids are going to get excited about it. Kids are going to talk to each other.” Pitts continued by addressing the skills required for the district’s future-focus. “There are some skills that we can’t teach here at the high school that can only be done through an online experience,” he says. ■



“My favorite thing about Launch is the flexibility.”—Jaessa Brown



Lebanon at a Glance

K-12 Enrollment: 4,568

High School Population: 1,364

MASA District: Southwest

School Colors: Black and Gold

Mascot: Yellowjackets

Fun Fact: In 1889, a well digger working in Lebanon found that his tools could pick up nails—the water had magnetized them. Bathing in the magnetic waters was said to have healing powers, and visitors came to bathe in them and drink from the well. “One of the reasons our yearbook is called The Magnet really comes from the fact that we had that water that had magnetic properties,” says Director of Curriculum & Instruction Jay Roth.



Speaking from Experience

In summer 2017, the Reeds Spring School District offered one Launch course to its students—now it offers a variety of Launch courses all year long.



Janna Elfrink, Director of Instruction at Reeds Spring, says the district is offering seven Launch courses this summer.

Health is always a popular class at Reeds Spring High School. In fact, the required class actually became a bit too popular a few years ago—it was regularly filling up with juniors and seniors and was never available to those incoming freshman looking to get ahead. “Those seated classes fill up with upper classmen, and that’s the priority,” says Janna Elfrink, Director of Instruction at Reeds Spring High School. “We have to cap that number, but we still had such a waiting list.”

That’s why the Reeds Spring School District decided to offer a Launch course

in summer 2017. “When we started, we just offered Health to our incoming freshman,” Elfrink says. The district had a positive experience with the summer offering, so it made more Launch classes available to students for the 2017–2018 school year and summer. “We thought, ‘Why limit it to just Health this summer?’” Elfrink says. “I think that’s just a result of seeing how successful it has been. We have seven courses we are offering for summer 2018, and we’re offering them to more than just our incoming freshman.”

When it comes to supporting Launch in Reeds Spring, Elfrink is in great company. “We have a Launch team now,” she says. This team all works with students and elects course offerings, and it includes

“We are able to offer them just about anything they would ever want or need with Launch—options that we couldn’t offer in a seated course before here at Reeds Spring.”
—Janna Elfrink

Elfrink along with the superintendent, several administrators, two instructional coaches and, of course, two high school counselors. “What our counselors are aware of now, because we have Launch, is that they don’t have to tell students ‘No’ very often anymore,” Elfrink says. “We are able to offer them just about anything they would ever want or need with Launch—options that we couldn’t offer in a seated course before here at Reeds Spring. We really don’t have to limit students’ choices anymore.”

Reeds Spring High School Counselor Jennifer Nichols agrees. “As far as scheduling, Launch allows us to be flexible,” Nichols says. And this isn’t just because of the Traditional Virtual course offerings



Reeds Spring senior Connor Wiest takes Personal Finance online to make room in his schedule for his Capstone course.

helping traditional students. “One of the benefits of Launch is that it offers Credit Recovery along with Credit Acquisition,” Nichols says. This helps students make up failed courses, and it helps those students who show up mid-semester and need to get into a class right away. “Students who come in late and have missed part of the year don’t have to miss out on any of the classroom curriculum,” Nichols says.

Connor Wiest is one of several Reeds Spring High School seniors who has

benefitted from taking online classes with Launch. “I’m taking Personal Finance online,” Wiest says. “I needed that to graduate this year.” He had one-too-many classes to fit into his traditional schedule, though, so he needed a solution that would also allow him to take a leadership course called Cornerstone. “Taking online Personal Finance was a really good idea for me because throwing that in there gets me the class I need as well as being able to still have fun in high school,” Wiest says.

Classmate Samantha Godfrey was in a similar situation, so she took Health online. “I really liked the teacher,” Godfrey says. She’s speaking of Ms. Laura Michel, one of Launch’s Missouri-certified educators who meets DESE highly-qualified status. “She was really sweet, and she would go out of her way to make sure we were doing well.” Godfrey also liked that her Launch class was self paced—an option that’s made available thanks to Canvas, Launch’s learning platform. “If there was a unit that interested me more—in a class usually they just pass it and then keep going—but I could sit and study more into them and research more, which I thought was really neat,” Godfrey says. While she may be waving goodbye to Reeds Spring this May once she finalizes her college plans, Godfrey is leaving a good word on Launch behind. “If I was to recommend this to an underclassman, I would tell them that it’s a good idea,” she says. “It’s an awesome opportunity to add an online course in, and it’s great when it gives you the opportunity to get it in before graduation.” ■



Reeds Spring at a Glance

K-12 Enrollment: 1,861

High School Population: 650

MASA District: Southwest

School Colors: Red and White

Mascot: Wolves

Fun Fact: Reeds Spring is 30 minutes south of Springfield on Table Rock Lake. The school district serves the communities of Reeds Spring, Branson West, Kimberling City, Cape Fair and Indian Point.



LAUNCH YOUR Summer



As the spring semester wraps up, students wave goodbye to books and backpacks and dive into three months of freedom. Unfortunately, this means they also risk summer learning loss. Springfield Public Schools recognized this risk years ago, and since then the district has been working to keep its 25,000-plus southwest Missouri learners engaged all year long with expanded summer offerings. For grades K–8, the district added online learning academies, which are computer programs that come with a teacher and use adaptive technology to meet students at their current learning levels in order to help them progress. The district also expanded its seated options to attract students with a variety of engaging programming, and it piloted Launch, a virtual school created to help Missouri students statewide with course access issues. Launch allows both Springfield students and partner district students the opportunity to take more than 70 courses in both June and July. Read on to learn more about Launch and how we can help you elevate your district’s summer enrichment opportunities.

Summer in Springfield

Four years ago, Springfield Public Schools (SPS) had approximately 3,500 summer school students. This number grew to more than 12,000 students in summer 2017. “We knew that if we could better engage students in summer learning, they would statistically be more likely to be successful in their educational careers and beyond,” says Dr. Ben Hackenwerth, SPS’s Executive Director of Innovation and Information. Dr. Hackenwerth discusses the efforts that the district has taken to mitigate summer slide, the all-too-real occurrence of students falling behind during their months off due to a lack of learning and engagement.

Among these efforts is the offering of summer school courses online with Launch, Missouri’s virtual school that is headquartered at SPS. Launch was designed and developed by Missouri educators and is aligned to Missouri Learning Standards. Launch offers more than 70 online courses to online learners, and all of these courses are taught by Missouri teachers who meet DESE’s highly qualified teacher status.

While SPS offers Launch’s expanded course catalog to its students all year long, the Launch team and the district’s superintendent, Dr. John Jungmann, has larger goals. “It was a year ago last January that Dr. Jungmann came to us and said, ‘What if we could offer Launch courses to students all across the state?’” says Dr. Nichole Lemmon, Director of Blended Learning at SPS and a leader of the Launch team. Since then, Launch has worked to partner with schools statewide to offer their students access to the same online courses offered to Springfield Public Schools’

students. Launch was designed to be a benefit to partner districts, as our partners can expand their course offerings online without the high costs of course development, platform acquisition and staffing. Launch partners are still able to keep students as their own and retain state Average Daily Attendance reimbursement.

Launch had 42 partner districts as of press time, and our staffers are regularly traveling the state to meet and engage with districts to discuss potential new partnerships. We’ve been extra engaged lately, as we’re trying to help as many Missouri districts as possible expand their summer offerings. “Our goal is for districts to be able to engage with students who they might not normally engage with during the summer months,” says Dr. Hackenwerth, who also leads the Launch team. “They’re going to provide these students with courses they may not have access to otherwise, and they’re going to allow a lot of them to take required courses during summer so that they have more flexibility in their schedules for next year.”

Springfield saw great success with Launch last summer and expects similar results this year, and Dr. Hackenwerth notes that it has been a great addition to the district’s summer offerings. Dana Hubbard, SPS’s Director of Summer Learning and Student Experiences, agrees. “It’s really been a testimony to the fact that if you build engaging, relevant and personalized opportunities for learning, kids really do step up to the plate,” she says. “Especially with online, because it’s that anytime, anywhere learning that some students really desire.”

LET US HELP YOU PLAN YOUR SUMMER!

Ready to expand your summer school offerings with Launch’s 70-plus online courses? We’d love to add you as a partner and help you attract summer learners with free custom marketing!

1. Join Launch

If you’re not already a Launch member district, your first step is calling 417-523-0417 or emailing savannah@fueledbylaunch.com to set up a meeting. We will schedule a visit or conference call with you and your team to see how Launch can meet your learners’ needs.

2. Place Your Order

If you do decide to join Launch as a member district, Marketing & Engagement Manager Savannah Waszczuk will welcome you with a wealth of information. Your membership will include an offer for free customized summer marketing catalogs. If you’d like these, we’ll take your order and customize the catalog for your district.

3. Share With Students

A few days after placing your order, you’ll receive a digital proof of your school’s catalog for review. Once you make all suggested changes and are happy with the product, Launch will print you 200 copies and ship them to your school-provided address. Your only task is distributing the catalogs.





Launching Summer Learning Across the State

As of press time, more than 20 of Launch's district partners had already committed to offering our summer courses online. Among these is the Reeds Spring School District, which originally offered one Launch summer course in Summer 2017. "We thought, 'Why limit it to just health this summer?'" says Janna Elfrink, Director of Instruction at Reeds Spring. "I think that's just a result of seeing how successful it has been. We have seven courses

we are offering for summer 2018, and we're offering them to more than just our incoming freshman." The district originally offered health because the seated course always has a long waiting list.

Camdenton School District is another district offering Launch summer courses, providing its students the opportunity to take Health, Personal Finance, Physical Fitness and Web Design. "Physical Fitness is one of our most popular online classes—especially in the summer,"

Summer Academies

Interested in having your elementary and middle school students engage in online learning this summer? Check out Launch's Summer Academies. These online learning programs come with a certified teacher, and they use adaptive software to meet students where they are in their reading, math and computer science skills, then help them advance. All academies are non-credit classes, however districts can earn .5 Average Daily Attendance (ADA) reimbursement for each academy a student attends. Allison Pilley, Director of Learning Support at Springfield Public Schools, shared information on our academies below.

Academy	Grade	Subject	Course Details
Code Academy	1–8	Computer Coding	This academy was created for all computer-loving kiddos. Students are assessed at their learning level and learn how apps and games are created, and they even have a chance to make their own video game! This academy is offered at both the elementary and middle school levels. (Learn more about our coding academy on p. 12.)
Lexia Academy	1–5	Reading	Lexia Academy learners use adaptive software that meets them at their current reading level. Students complete the course with enhanced skills and confidence.
Dreambox Academy	1–5	Math	Students enrolled in Dreambox Academy are assessed on their current math skills and met at their learning level. They enhance their math skills through a variety of interactive curriculum.
Reading Plus Academy	3–12	Reading	Students roll their reading skills into this academy for increased reading independence, interest and knowledge enhancement. Reading Plus Academy is offered at the elementary, middle and high school levels.
ALEKS Academy	6–12	Math	Students enhance their math skills through interactive math instruction. Learners are able to select from 6 th grade math through trigonometry support.

Dr. Lemmon says. The whole idea behind this is having students earn credit for things they are already going to be doing. “A lot of these kids are outside exercising in the summer anyway,” Dr. Lemmon says. “This is a great opportunity for them to earn required credit while they’re at it.”

Some of Launch’s partner schools are offering a small selection of Launch courses this summer, and others are taking advantage of the full course catalog and giving their students the opportunity to take more than 70 courses online. Select districts are offering summer school in June only, while others are opening their summer school schedule up for June and July. Launch works to meet every district’s individual needs—let us know if you’re interested, and we’ll start the conversation. ■



Want to see all the courses we offer this summer? Visit fueledbylaunch.com/courses to view our entire course catalog.



Make Launch Your Own

Ready to expand your students’ summer learning opportunities? A few of Springfield Public School District’s seasoned summer school staffers share important tips to consider while planning your district’s summer offerings.

Make Your Summer Twice as Long. By offering students Launch’s online classes in both June and July, you’ll double the opportunity for summer enrichment and increase your odds of engaging a larger number of students. You can increase your summer school offerings by extending your summer hours on your DESE Summer School Application.

Think Practical and Popular. Think about scheduling—what required classes always have a waiting list? If districts prefer to limit the number of summer courses they offer, opening popular, required courses online is a great way to go. In addition to helping eliminate scheduling problems later in the year, this also allows some students to get ahead and build flexibility into their future schedules. Launch’s Health and Personal Finance courses are great examples of these practical, popular offerings.

Expand Your Course Catalog. Just like the students we serve during the school year, summer school students have a variety of interests. Consider expanding your summer offerings beyond required courses to courses that you don’t normally offer. Japanese and Psychology of the Holocaust are popular Launch offerings that expand district course catalogs.

All Things Data and State Reporting

You want to offer your students Launch summer school courses, and we want to make sure your district properly reports your Average Daily Attendance for state reimbursement. Amy St. John, our Director of Performance Analytics, shares the appropriate steps to take.

Step One: All Launch partner districts choose Launch as a Service Provider for summer courses. Make sure you have appropriately completed your Core Data Screen 24A–DESE Summer School Application.

Step Two: When completing the program information section, use your high school, estimated enrollment, grade span, Launch open and close dates and your district

hours per day for Core Data Screen 24A–DESE Summer School Application.

Step Three: Choose “yes” for service provider, and add the comment “Virtual curriculum provided by Launch” in the district comments section. Provide a copy to the Launch office for review. Submit via your district’s core data by May 1, 2018.

Step Four: Create a schedule for your students to ensure a virtual placeholder is in place for Launch courses. Submit course information to DESE in June Course Assignment MOSIS file by June 30, 2018.

Step Five: Submit student attendance in August Enrollment & Attendance MOSIS file by August 15, 2018.

a second chance

After a rocky, overwhelming start to her senior year, Becca Lewis began taking Launch online classes and was able to earn her high school diploma.

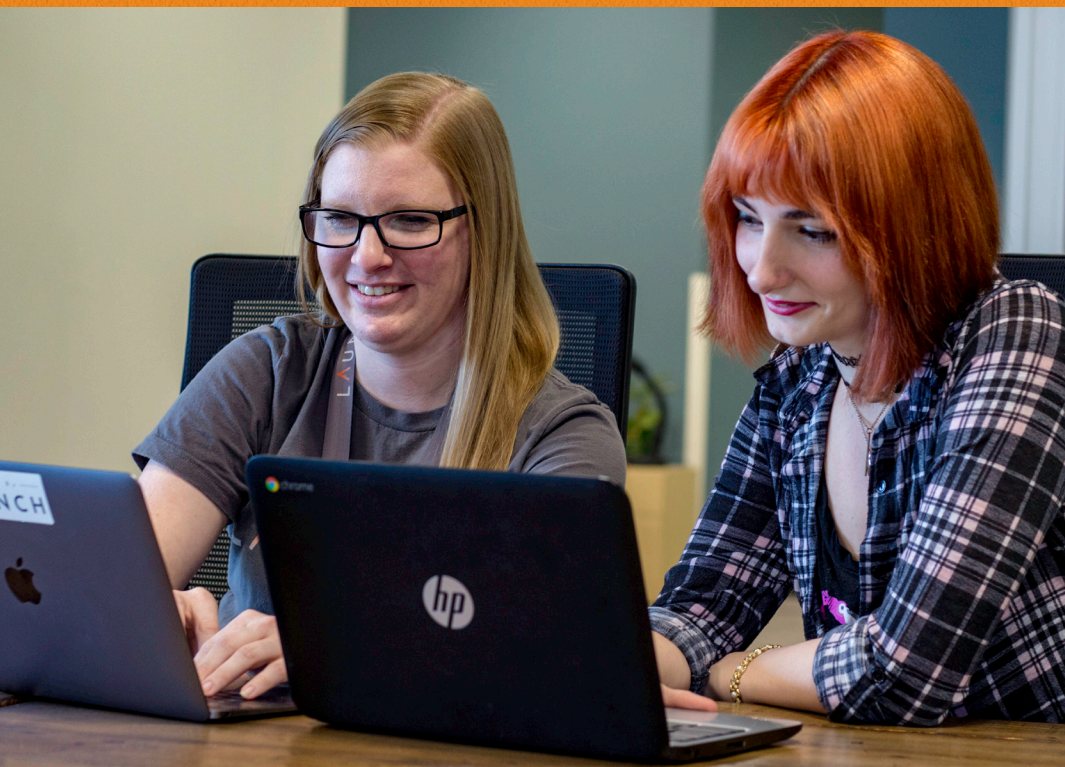
A smile took over Becca's face as she draped a black graduation gown over her jeans and flannel shirt. Her friend was standing by her side, and the Springfield Public Schools administration offices quickly became her stage—after completing her last Launch course online, Becca earned the final credit she needed to become a high school graduate.

SPS Superintendent Dr. John Jungmann shook Becca's hand, and the two took a photo. "Congratulations,

Becca," Dr. Jungmann said. "Remember, this is the starting line, not the finish line. Let us know how we can help you in the future."

For Dr. Jungmann and the rest of the Launch team, this was a proud moment—seeing one of your students graduate is always a great reminder of the "why" behind what we do each day. But for Becca, this moment was even bigger. Graduating high school was something that seemed impossible to her just a few months prior when she was living in

a car with her fiancé. It seemed unimaginable when she had to spend every one of her free moments worrying about finding a job or paying rent. And it was something she certainly never dreamed of after learning her mom was diagnosed with cancer. Life had stacked all the cards against 19-year-old Becca Lewis, but on December 18, 2017, she had finally beaten them. She had finally won. With the help of Launch's online courses, Becca Lewis defied the odds and earned her high school diploma.



The Journey to Springfield

Last August, Becca found herself among a sea of other students walking the halls of Springfield's Hillcrest High School. It was her senior year, but she was in a far different place than before—this was the first year since kindergarten that Becca wasn't attending school in Houston, Missouri.

"I had dropped out half way through the year because of depression and other mental issues," Becca says of her final days at Houston. It was a rough time in her life, as she was faced with a handful

of unfortunate circumstances. She no longer had the comfort or familiarity of a “home” as she did in past years. The family support system that is so crucial for students didn’t exist for her any longer. “My mom had also been diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma,” Becca says. “It was a really stressful time for me. When I finally did find a place to live, I couldn’t get a job, so I still had to worry about things like, ‘Am I going to be able to pay rent this month?’”

As Becca attended a high school filled with happy, chatty teenagers, she was depressed. She couldn’t focus. “On top of all of that, school was just so difficult,” she says. “It’s like staying up all night, and then going to work the next day. It’s really tiring. There’s a lot to do, and you just feel like nothing that you do is enough to get it done.”

Becca and her fiancé, Caleb Giddens, moved from Houston to West Plains. “For a short amount of time, we did live in West Plains in his car,” Becca says. “While we were there, he was going to college and we tried enrolling me in school, but you can’t really do that without a permanent address.” Since they weren’t able to find a place to live, Becca and Caleb moved from West Plains to Springfield. “Caleb’s dad helped us find the place that we live now,” Becca says.

This apartment is located in Springfield’s Hillcrest school district, so Becca soon became a Hillcrest student. “Even there, I was struggling,” Becca says. “I was struggling to make it to school on time, because he had to work, and then he would have to take a break from his job to pick me up from school and take me home. It was just not a good situation.” That’s when the two decided to talk to



the school counselor. “One day Caleb was off work, and he took me to school,” Becca says. “We talked to the counselor, and she got me online with Launch.”

Earning Credits With Launch

Becca’s start with Launch wasn’t as progressive as she dreamed. “I struggled for a little bit and even stopped doing some work for a few months,” she says. “At first, online school can be different if all you’ve known was school in person.” But deep down, Becca still had a motivation to graduate. She decided to contact the Launch office when she realized she had completely blanked on one of her classes. “That’s when I contacted Nichole,” Becca says. She’s talking about Launch’s Director of Blended Learning, Dr. Nichole Lemmon. “Nichole put me through to Amelia, and Amelia helped me get everything back on track.”

Amelia Horras is Launch’s Digital Learning Coordinator. “Working with Becca was a reminder that every student has a unique story,” Amelia says. “She was highly motivated to earn her diploma, but she needed a different solution than

Becca Lewis graduated last December with the help of Launch. She worked with Launch’s Amelia Horras to get back on track (opposite).

what traditional school offers. It’s exciting for me to see Launch offer that—I like that we have options and can meet students where they’re at.”

Becca shares an equal appreciation. “Amelia really put things into perspective for me,” she says. “She sat me down, and she said that regardless of what I did, Launch was there to help. Just because I was a little behind didn’t mean that I couldn’t catch up. I think that’s when I realized that this stuff is probably the easiest life is going to be for a while, and that I might as well just jump in headfirst.”

It was a couple of months later when Becca returned to the SPS administration offices—her friend by her side—and officially graduated. After Becca shook Dr. Jungmann’s hand, her friend turned to her and asked a question. “How happy are you that you can graduate?” he said. Becca looked back at him and formed the same smile she had earlier. “Can?” she asked. “I just did! Did you see? I did that! I’m so happy. It feels so great.” ■



Evan Parker takes Launch courses online so he has more time to volunteer. He has volunteered 300 hours throughout the last year, and he spent many of those hours at Springfield's Dickerson Park Zoo.

Launch Your Dream

Central High School student Evan Parker enrolled in Launch's online courses to add flexibility to his schedule, and he used many of his new-found hours to volunteer at the zoo.

Photo by Lucas Fritch Photography | lucasfritch.com

Evan Parker is a bright kid with an even brighter future—after he graduates from Springfield's Central High School this spring, he's headed to Yale University to study ecology and evolutionary biology. To prepare for his time in The Ivy League, Parker spent his high school years taking courses required for an International Baccalaureate Diploma. "There are a lot of prerequisites we have to take in order to get the IB diploma," Parker says.

While many IB students use summer school to attain additional credits, Parker couldn't—he spends his summer hours volunteering, often at Springfield's Dickerson Park Zoo. "I've done a lot of work with the zoo's Raptor Rehabilitation Program," Parker says. "I've also gotten to do a variety of other hands-on veterinary work."

Parker credits Launch for affording him this opportunity—he earned his credits for Physical Fitness, Personal Finance and Government online so he didn't

have to take them during the school day or his summer break. "Launch allowed me to get those prerequisites out of the way without having to sacrifice other classes in school that I wanted," Parker says. "It frees up so many opportunities to focus on things you like, as well as other things you may want to explore." ■



Member District **Directory**

Without district partnerships, Launch wouldn't be possible. Below are the Missouri school districts who are partnered with Launch to help give all Missouri students equal course access.

Ash Grove

Aurora

Ava

Bolivar

Branson

Bronaugh

Camdenton

Carl Junction

Cassville

Clever

Crane

Crocker

East Newton

El Dorado Springs

Everton

Fair Grove

Fordland

Hollister

Houston

Kirkwood

Lebanon

Logan-Rogersville

Marshfield

Miller

Monett

Morgan County

Nixa

Ozark

Republic

Reeds Spring

Sedalia

Seneca

South Nodaway

Sparta

Stockton

Springfield Catholic

Springfield R-12

Stewartsville

Thayer

University City

Webb City

Willard

Want to Partner?

Don't see your district on this list? We'd love to come to your school, meet your team and see how Launch can help your students with course access issues. To request a visit, contact Savannah Waszczuk at 417-523-0417 or savannah@fueledbylaunch.com.

Disclaimer: Listed member districts are accurate as of press time (March 7, 2018).



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