

Lee County School Board receives reports on summer programs

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For the Opelika
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The Lee County Board of Education held a school board meeting June 12, where Dr. Brad Hur and Nancy Blanco provided updates on summer programs: STEM Academy, partnership with EAMH, Summer Feeding and Counseling Academy.

This summer, Project Lead the Way and STEM academies have been implemented in nine schools. Project Lead the Way is a nonprofit organization that develops STEM criteria for use elementary, middle and high schools. STEM education helps students more effectively develop learning pathways in technology-driven careers.

They decided to replace the traditional summer school with STEM academies according to Hunter because, "originally we would start with 75 kids at the start of the summer and then end up with about 20."

This program is in high demand. At one point, Hunter added that school officials thought they would have to start a lottery, and they currently have waiting lists for children wanting to join. "We started out with 660 applications, so that really spoke to us that parents wanted something different for their children in the summertime," Hunter said.

They have trained about 70 teachers in the last few months, a fun but difficult process according

to Hunter.

“We really look at this as, ‘how do we prepare our students for the careers of tomorrow. And what skills they need to be successful in different fields?’” Blanco said .

Through the program, children will have the opportunity to receive a free breakfast and lunch through the East Alabama Food Bank.

The Counseling Academy, which is their partnership with East Alabama Mental Health, also provides the school system with therapists to help with social and emotional skills and has been providing help to 15 students this summer.

