

ACCESS

PREMIERING THIS FALL: LAUNCH VIRTUAL LEARNING OFFERS EXPANDED COUNSELING SUPPORT, SPECIAL EDUCATION & GIFTED SERVICES & LIVE COURSES FOR GRADES K-12

ELEMENTARY UPGRADES
Learn how we continue to improve our virtual K-5 learning experience



Introducing: Launch

From the very beginning, Launch's online courses were designed to stand apart from other online providers.

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 aligned to Missouri Learning Standards and delivered to online learners by high-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 and learn course details, and you can even view sample assignments. We can also send a couple of Launch team members to your district to talk to your team and see how we can help your students with course access issues. If you have specific questions you can't find answers to online or would like to set up an appointment, contact our Marketing and Engagement Manager, Savannah Waszczuk, at (417) 523-0417 or savannah@fueledbylaunch.com.

Launch: Serving K-12 Learners Statewide

Recently expanded programming allows Launch to serve all Missouri learners.



Elementary

Launch's elementary programming is available for K-5 students and includes live, synchronous daily lessons with teachers. Students also have access to PE, Music, Art and Gifted services. Classes are instructed by a full-time Missouri educator, and class sizes are limited to meet DESE recommendations.



Middle School

Designed for students in grades 6-8, Launch's middle school catalog includes courses in all core areas as well as multiple world language offerings and exploratories. All class sizes are limited to 33:1 with live teacher tutoring available, and teachers live and work in Missouri school districts.



High School

Launch offers a complete, comprehensive course catalog for learners in grades 9-12. To better serve all students, AP, Honors, dual credit and credit recovery courses are available. Class sizes are limited to 33:1 with live teacher tutoring available, and teachers live and work in Missouri school districts.

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LAUNCH NEXT

This fall, Launch will begin to offer special education services, gifted education services, expanded counseling support and live, synchronous lessons for all grade levels. Learn the ins and outs of these new offerings, and find out how they can help your students find success online.

DISTRICT PROFILE: CENTER 58

Administrators in the Center 58 school district are big supporters of Launch's credit recovery program. Learn how the district supports its most at-risk students.

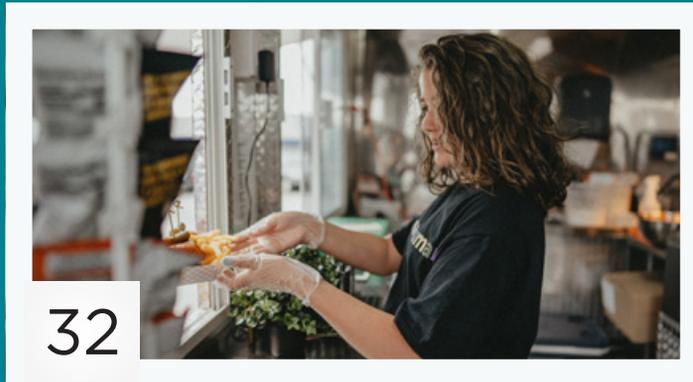
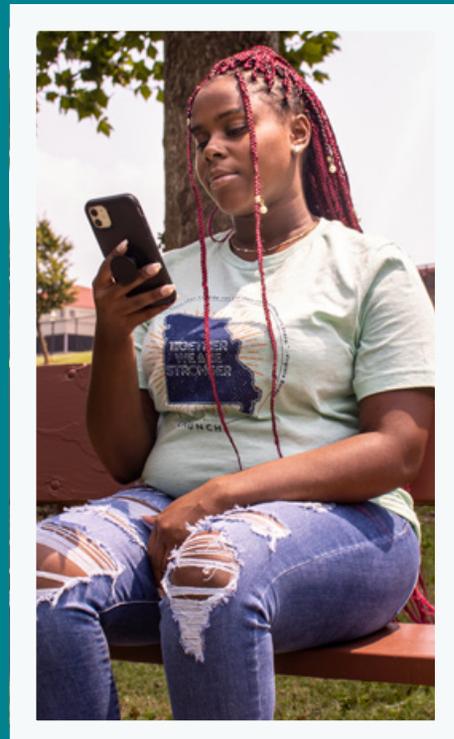
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↓ SUCCESS STORIES

After being bullied, having a baby and becoming pregnant with her second child, 18-year-old Jurnesha Shelton utilized Launch courses to help earn her high school diploma.



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WHY I LAUNCH

Would you like fries with that? Meet Isabella Oliva, a full-time fifth grade Launch student who spends her spare time helping her mom run a food truck.

DISTRICT PROFILE: MORGAN CO. R-II

Students at Versailles Elementary were offered the chance to go full-time online with Launch because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Learn one family's success story.

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ACCESS

LAUNCH

THE VOICE OF VIRTUAL LEARNING IN MISSOURI

Staff Poll

Launch continues to grow, and we don't plan on stopping anytime soon! Write a marquee headline that may be written about Launch 5 years from now.

The Launch Team

Dr. Ben Hackenwerth

Executive Director, Innovation & Learning Supports

Dr. Nichole Lemmon

Director, Virtual Learning

Launch Officially Now Partners with all Districts in Missouri!

Dr. Brady Quirk

Assistant Director, Virtual Learning

Explosive Interplanetary Growth in Launch Enrollment Causes Leaders to Consider Satellite Office on Mars.

Jessica Johnson

SIS Coordinator

Launchables: Launch partners with local communities to provide meals to FTV students in need.

Raegan Cash

Attendance Secretary

Launching Off: Launch Virtual Learning reaches new heights with enrollment numbers.

Abby Brownfield

Department Secretary

Launch University: Launch opens an affordable virtual college program for Missouri students.

David Schuman

Counselor

Launch Offers First Virtual Reality Classroom through VR Headsets!

Silvia Espinosa

Counselor

Launch Goes International: Virtual learning services now available in 5 different languages!

Andrea Hackenwerth

Department Secretary

Soaring to New Heights: Launch offers first-ever virtual field trips to Launch State Park!

Audrey Dlabach

Secretary

Janna Elfrink

Coordinator of Student Success

Missy Sandbothe

Launch Support Specialist, St. Louis office

Stacey Walker

Administrative Assistant, Kansas City office

Caitlin Seiler

Administrative Assistant, St. Louis office

Creative Services

Savannah Waszczuk

Manager, Marketing and Engagement

Moving Through the Midwest: Launch Virtual Learning now offers courses in 7 states.

Jared Chester

Graphic Designer

Sean Wright

Videography and Photography

Development

Dr. Meghan Roe

Coordinator, Course Development

!Bienvenidos a Launch!: Launch Virtual Learning opens international bilingual center.

Linda Ayres

Quality Assurance Specialist

3...2...1... Liftoff! Launch Continues to Expand Across the States.

Susan Brown

Quality Assurance Specialist

Launch Loves its Learners!

Nicki Dickson

Digital Developer

From Missouri to California and even Hawaii, Everyone is Launching!

Justin Thomas

Digital Developer

Brad Maples

Digital Developer

How One Public School's Virtual Education Program Took the Nation by Storm

Amy Jackson

Digital Developer

Launch Around the World!: Launch provides a student exchange program to send students around the globe while supporting their virtual education.

Melissa James

Digital Developer

Amy Shaw

Digital Developer

The Official Launch Bus is Rolling Out Statewide This Summer: Be on the lookout as it comes to a town near you!

Payton Halinger

Digital Developer

Ryan Lindsey

Digital Developer

IT and Support

Mark Myers

IT Manager

Launch Sets the Standard for US Virtual Education.



Darren Rush*Launch Support Specialist***Jay Grawe***Application Specialist***Mark Grant***Software Developer*

Launch Virtual Learning Student Goes on the First Flight to Mars.

Ivy Hamilton*Software Developer***Marcus Patrick***Inventory Clerical***Adam Shawley***Launch Support Specialist*

Launch Looks Back: 15 years of growth and education.

Wendy Arendell*Launch Support Specialist*

Former Launch Student Becomes President: Turn to p. 6 for more details!

Eric Tran*Launch Support Specialist*

Mission Impossible? Not for Launch!: Get ready to blast off with Launch US, offering online classes for the entire nation!

Ben Cook*Launch Support Specialist*

Launch Liftoff: Launch creates its own Learning Management System!

Myles Gildard*Launch Support Specialist***Robert Tinney***Launch Support Specialist***Student Services****Dr. Theresa Christian***Principal*

3...2...1... Lift-Off to Learning with LVLC. The Future is Today!

Dr. Kim Spence*Assistant Principal*

Launch Rockets to the Top of Virtual Learning & Continues to Reach for the Stars!

Helen Williams*Assistant Principal*

Launch Virtual Learning is Leading Public Education as the Only National Public Education Offering for K-12 Students.

John Mott*Assistant Principal*

LAUNCH, Learning Always, Understanding Needs of Children—away or at Home.

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English instructor Airin Bassett brings nearly 2 decades of teaching experience to Launch.

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She oversees grade distribution. She maintains the master schedule. She's our SIS Coordinator!

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Students explore significant moments in Black history in this new elective course.

Contact Us

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Springfield, MO 65802

(417) 523-0417

✉ email

support@fueledbylaunch.com

🌐 website

🐦 twitter





*“The next generation of Launch Virtual Learning highlights our passion to support public education, provide course access, and meet the needs of all learners across the state of Missouri.”
—Dr. Nichole Lemmon*

Director’s Note

Launch Director Dr. Nichole Lemmon previews the new services that Launch will offer Missouri learners this fall.

If you’ve ever had the opportunity to create something really cool in your career, you know how much pride you feel in watching it grow, evolve and change. Since 2011, I’ve been honored to lead the work of creating virtual education for Springfield Public

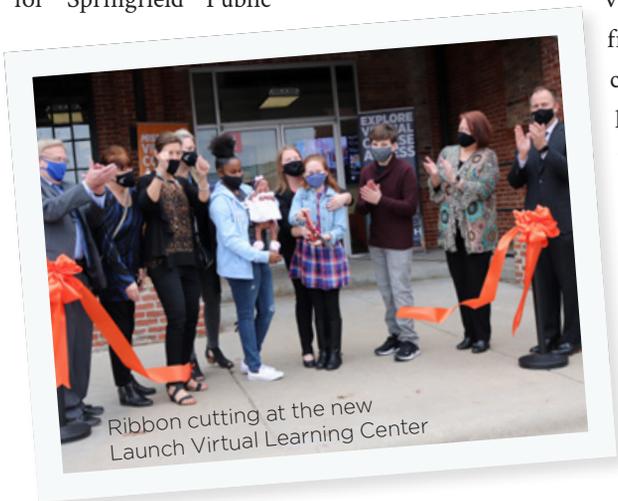
Schools, and ultimately the students of the state of Missouri. If the past year has taught us anything here at Launch, it is that through flexibility and listening, we will become better for students.

Welcome to Launch Next. Our latest virtual learning solutions came from you. Your emails, phone calls, celebrations and concerns led us to where we are today. The next generation of Launch Virtual Learning highlights our passion to support public education, provide course access, and meet the needs of all learners across the state of Missouri. And, it has been so fun to create!

Expanded mental health supports, programming for students seeking special education and gifted services and courses with live instruction are all now available. We can’t wait for you to experience Launch Next and give us feedback.

We trust these additions will continue to create a future-proof organization that supports public schools in the state of Missouri. We are here, we are listening, and we are so excited for what comes next. See you online,

Dr. Nichole Lemmon
Director, Virtual Learning



Ribbon cutting at the new Launch Virtual Learning Center

Launch Letters

Hey Missouri, thanks for the compliments! Read on to see a few notes we've received from Launch students and parents.

Parent Praise

"You are doing so much to see that my son succeeds and is prepared for next year. I wish he could take you with him! I hope he has learned how speaking up and asking for guidance will/is helping him move forward. You are his guardian angel teacher, and I will never be able to express to you how much that means to me and him. I know he feels very comfortable and safe with you. I thank you for caring about your students!"

Joseph

Launch Parent
Springfield Public Schools

Joseph wrote this note to Launch Math teacher Heather Huckstep. Mrs. Huckstep was super excited to hear from this parent, as she tutored the student 3-15 hours every week during the second semester. The student went from failing almost every class to getting all As and Bs! The Launch team is proud of Mrs. Huckstep and our additional team of 1,000+ teachers statewide who specialize in giving individual attention and support to each of their students.—Editor

Spanish in the Stands 🇪🇸

"Hola! I thought I would tell you that learning some Spanish really paid off for me last night when I went to the Springfield Cardinals game. I made a sign, in Spanish, for one of the Bilingual Cardinals players, and I got his baseball bat from the game! Thanks for teaching Spanish this semester! Have a good day!"

Jaren

Launch Student
Springfield Public Schools

Jaren sent this note to his Launch Spanish teacher after his custom sign scored him some attention at the Springfield Cardinals game. We're so proud to see you putting your new Spanish skills to good use, Jaren!—Editor

Small Town, Big Opportunities

"I just wanted to say thank you. I am off to Westpoint now and begin cadet basic training on June 28. My online classes have been challenging, and it was because I had you as a teacher I made it through as I did. These online classes give kids in super small towns like me (I'm in a graduating class of 9) the chance to compete with everyone else across the state and nation. It is an incredible service, and I am beyond thankful. I feel fully prepared to begin my collegiate career at USMA because of these online classes. Thank you so much, and have a great summer!"

Harrison

Launch Student
Hume R-VIII

A senior Launch AP Physics student sent this note to Launch Science Teacher Megan Walcher after completing his AP Physics course. Thanks, Harrison, for reminding us of the importance of the work we do! Good luck in training!—Editor



Launch Chat Is Where It's At!

"I was just testing out the new chat feature but I didn't expect a very polite and kind answer. Thank you!"

Alexander

Launch Student
Brentwood School District

Alexander left this note for Launch's support team after a successful Launch Chat troubleshooting session. Launch's support team added live chat support with the summer 2021 semester, and it's been utilized by thousands of students! The chat feature is available to students in their Canvas course.—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 partner, 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.

Launch Elementary 2.0

A few changes are coming with Launch's full-time elementary (K-5) programming in Fall 2021: learn about them here!



Last fall, Launch offered K-5 programming to more than 8,000 students across the state—all for the first time ever. As we continue to collect feedback from students, parents and partners, our Elementary leadership team is continually working in collaboration with Launch's digital developers to ensure the elementary experience continues to improve.

The Power to Move

The Launch team learned a few things during our first year of elementary programming, one being that teachers need flexibility to move coursework around. “This year, teachers will have the ability to move assignments from module to module,” says Launch Assistant Principal Helen Williams. “This allows our teachers to adapt their courses based on student

needs, and it allows them to personalize their students' learning a bit more.”

Grade Upgrade

“We needed to find a way to better personalize the learning that was happening with our elementary students,” Williams says. Like last year, Launch awards grades in Proficiency and Completion, however, this year students earn a mastery level of 1 to 5 to determine proficiency. Completion grades are now determined based on communication, submissions and miscellaneous scores. “This year, attending live lessons will contribute to the student's communication requirements,” Williams says. “But so will individual Zoom lessons, recorded lessons and even emails and phone calls. These changes all

allow us to be able to provide more flexibility to all types of learners—some who may not be on a traditional schedule.”

Streamlined Content

When looking at a Launch course, returning students will notice a lot fewer buttons. “The overall goal was making the courses easier to navigate,” says Launch Coordinator of Course Development Dr. Meghan Roe. “It's a lot more user-friendly, and there are a lot fewer clicks for kids. We also streamlined the way that students hand in assignments, which helps simplify things on their end.”

Launch Library

Our Launch students may not attend seated classes or visit the school library, but they can still check out books! With this new online library, learners have access to dozens of books and video books for their enjoyment. ■



BY THE NUMBERS

Check out the fascinating figures consuming Launch's world of online learning.

664,549

MO Students have access to Launch courses

SIXTY-TWO PERCENT

% of Missouri Public School Districts that Use Launch

2020—2021

FALL

470

OF LAUNCH K-12 COURSES

12

OF NEW COURSES RELEASED

33

OF FULLY REVISED COURSES

\$13,897,355

RETIREMENT-ELIGIBLE STIPENDS PAID TO MISSOURI TEACHERS

1,172

MISSOURI TEACHERS FOR SPRING 2021

SPRING

65,651

OF SPRING ENROLLMENTS

5,947

OF SUPPORT CALLS ANSWERED

7,541

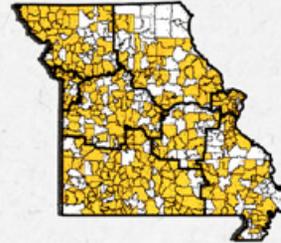
OF SUPPORT EMAILS ANSWERED

ELEVEN

NEW COURSES IN SPRING 2022

TWENTY-NINE

FULLY REVISED COURSES IN SPRING 2022



354

OF DISTRICT PARTNERS

SUMMER STATS

21,671

OF SUMMER 2021 ENROLLMENTS

321

OF MO TEACHERS THIS SUMMER

3,126

OF CREDITS RECOVERED IN JUNE & JULY

JUNE SESSION

4,112

OF SUPPORT EMAILS IN JUNE

2,081

OF SUPPORT CALLS ANSWERED IN JUNE

1,177

OF SUPPORT CHATS ANSWERED IN JUNE

COMING SOON!

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— F u e l e d B y —

LAUNCH

DUAL CREDIT

Fall 2021– Spring 2022

What is Dual Credit?

The dual credit program at Launch is a partnership between Launch and universities around the state to offer students an opportunity to earn college credits while also completing high school classes. Launch dual credit courses are taught by highly qualified instructors who meet the expectations set by the Higher Learning Commission and the Missouri Department of Higher Education.



Why Dual Credit?

Many students choose to enroll in dual credit options at Launch to participate in college-level courses in a safe, high school environment at a fraction of on-campus tuition. Many of our Dual Credit courses are CORE 42 approved and will transfer easily to participating colleges/universities. It is recommended to determine how course credits will transfer to the college/university of your choice prior to enrolling in your selected dual credit course.

Contact Us

Kim Spence, Dual Credit Coordinator
601 N. National Ave #102
Springfield, MO 65802

(417) 523-0417

dualcredit@fueledbylaunch.com

Frequently Asked Questions

Does my student qualify for Dual Credit?

Each university has guidelines for enrolling in Dual Credit classes. See the course information sheet linked in the course description on fueledbylaunch.com/courses regarding prerequisites, GPA and grade-level requirements.

How do I register for Dual Credit?

Launch teachers provide students with information regarding registration. You can also reach out to the Launch office for assistance at dualcredit@fueledbylaunch.com

If I miss the university's Dual Credit enrollment deadline, can I still register for Dual Credit?

No. Universities strictly enforce enrollment deadlines for Dual Credit. It is important to start the process early, as there are multiple steps to enrolling.

Are there scholarships available for Dual Credit?

Students on free and reduced lunches are eligible for up to 6 credit hours of free tuition at Missouri State University. Other colleges may have tuition assistance or scholarships. Ask your Launch teacher for more information.

What if I decided to drop a dual credit enrollment?

Each university has drop dates that allow prorated refunds. It is important to know the drop dates of your chosen university. If you wish to drop a dual credit enrollment, you must notify your teacher and the Launch office. Dropping a Dual Credit enrollment does not unenroll you from your Launch course.

How do I pay for my Dual Credit enrollment?

When registering, the student will create or update an account with the university. This essentially makes them a student at the university and will allow them to pay for course(s), order transcripts and see their final grades.

Should I contact the university with my Dual Credit concerns?

Your first point of contact should be your Launch teacher. If they are not able to assist with your questions, contact the Launch office at dualcredit@fueledbylaunch.com. Most questions can be answered without contacting the university directly.

If my student is in a 9 week section of a Dual Credit class, can they still earn Dual Credit?

Yes, Launch offers our Dual Credit classes in 9- or 18-week sessions.

What's Online

Just in time for the fall semester, we redesigned our website to provide our partner districts & families with an updated user-friendly layout & enhanced user navigation.



FUELED BY LAUNCH.COM MAKEOVER

Course Catalog Filters

With nearly 500 courses available, Launch's K-12 catalog expands far beyond the basics. Our new course filter allows users to select categories of classes from the main page view (for example, dual credit courses, Advanced Placement courses or courses that are offered live) to allow for an easier viewing experience.

Academic Services Outline

Would you like to learn more about the education services Launch offers students? If so, you're in luck! Our new "Academics" menu allows users to take a deeper dive into various Launch offerings, including: elementary, middle and high school programming; summer learning opportunities; special education services; gifted services; counseling services, live course opportunities and more!

Are you following Launch on Social Media?

The best way to keep up with @fueledbylaunch is to connect with us on Twitter, like our page on Facebook and follow us on Instagram! Get connected to see breaking Launch announcements and offerings, learn where we're visiting, request a meeting or learn our latest district partnerships.

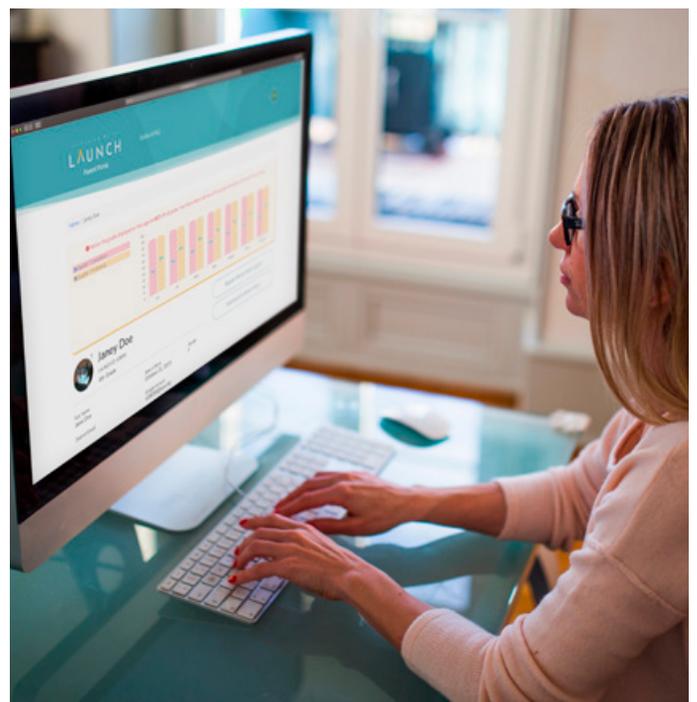


Enhanced Parent Experience

Providing adequate information to parents and families is a must. Launch's new website includes an "Experience Launch" button so parents can see sample student schedules and read about the experiences of other Launch students. In addition, we have a new "Parent Resources" section complete with learning guides, a calendar and access to Parent Portal, our new parent interface that provides parents and guardians with access to current grades, teacher information and much more!

Launch Parent Portal

Launch Parent Portal, an all-new feature for parents to stay up to date on their students' progress in Launch virtual classes, released on August 16 through fueledbylaunch.com. In the Parent Portal, guardians can see an overview of their students' current grades and have access to quick links to navigate to the Canvas page for each course. Parents can also find guides and resources for supporting their virtual students, see a schedule of upcoming parent webinars presented by our very own National Board certified Launch counselors, and sign up to receive our newsletters to stay up to date on all things Launch! ■



Fueled By

LAUNCH

HIGH SCHOOL CATALOG

English Language Arts

- AP English Lit. & Comp.
- Contemporary Lit
- Creative Writing I
- Creative Writing II
- English I
- English II
- English III
- English IV
- Film as Literature I
- Film as Literature II
- Grammar & Comp. I
- Grammar & Comp. II
- Introductory Speech
- Reading

Mathematics

- Algebra 1A
- Algebra 1B
- Algebra I
- Algebra II
- AP Calculus AB
- AP Calculus BC
- AP Computer Sci. Principles
- AP Computer Science A
- AP Statistics
- College Algebra
- Foundations of Algebra
- Geometry
- Intro. to Computer Science
- Pre-Calculus
- Professional Math
- Statistics
- Trigonometry

Fine Arts

- AP Studio Art 2-D Design
- Fine Arts Appreciation I: Music
- Fine Arts Appreciation II: Art
- Music Theory I
- Music Theory II

Health & PE

- Health
- Physical Education I
- Physical Fitness
- Lifetime Fitness

Practical Arts

- Childhood Development I
- Computer Applications
- Digital Communications
- Employment Internship
- FACS Internship
- Financial Accounting
- Personal Finance
- Web Design

Science

- AP Physics
- Astronomy
- Chemistry
- Earth Science
- General Biology
- Introductory Biology
- Introductory Chemistry
- Physical Science

Social Studies

- American Baseball History
- American Civil War
- AP European History
- AP Psychology
- AP US Gov. & Politics
- AP US History
- Black History
- Economics
- Liberty & Law (Gov.)
- Psychology of the Holocaust
- Psychology
- Sociology
- US History
- World Geography
- World History

Electives

- A+ Tutoring
- ACT Prep
- Driver Education
- HiSet Prep
- Volunteerism

World Language

- French I-IV
- German I-II
- Japanese I-II
- Spanish I-III

Special Education Services

- English I Strategies
- English II Strategies
- English III Strategies
- English IV Strategies
- Foundations of Algebra Strategies
- Algebra IA Strategies
- Algebra IB Strategies

Catalog Key

- Honors Available
- Credit Acquisition Available
- Credit Recovery Available
- Dual Credit Available
- NCAA Approved
- Advanced Placement
- Co-Taught Course
- Launch Live Course
- 0.5 Credit Course
- 1.0 Credit Course

COURSE CATALOG

Fall 2021– Spring 2022

MIDDLE SCHOOL CATALOG

ELA

ELA 6th Grade* • LIVE
ELA 7th Grade* • LIVE
ELA 8th Grade* • LIVE
Reading Middle School

Health & PE

Health 6th Grade
Health 7th Grade
Health 8th Grade
Physical Education 6th Grade
Physical Education 7th Grade
Physical Education 8th Grade

Mathematics

Accelerated 7th Grade Math
Mathematics 6th Grade* • LIVE
Mathematics 7th Grade* • LIVE
Mathematics 8th Grade* • LIVE
Algebra I

**Remediation available for core courses*

Science

Science 6th Grade* • LIVE
Science 7th Grade* • LIVE
Science 8th Grade* • LIVE

Social Studies

Social Studies 6th Grade* • LIVE
Social Studies 7th Grade* • LIVE
Social Studies 8th Grade* • LIVE

World Language

French I
German I
Spanish I-II

Exploratories

Discover Computer Coding I
Discover Computer Coding II
Music Journeys I
Music Journeys II
Visual Arts I
Visual Arts II

Gifted Education

Semester 1: TedEd Student Talks
(In collaboration with the Ted Talk International organization)
Semester 2: Mission to Mars

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CATALOG

Kindergarten - 5th Grade*

Homeroom

English Language Arts
Mathematics
Science
Social Studies
Health

Specials

Physical Education
Music
Art

**Elementary students are required to be enrolled full time.*

Gifted Education

Grades 1-2:

Quarter 1: Paleontology
Quarter 2: Mysteries
Quarter 3: Oceanography
Quarter 4: Fairy Tales

Grades 3-5:

Quarter 1: Citizen Scientist
Quarter 2: Around the World
Quarter 3 & 4: Coming Soon!

Flexibility for Fitness

Meet Marshfield High School senior Emma Cary, CrossFit's 2019 "Fittest Teen on Earth," who is entering her senior year with a full Launch schedule and plans to continue training and competing in CrossFit at the international level.

Access Launch: When did you start taking Launch courses?

Emma Cary: I took my first Launch class my sophomore year because Spanish wasn't being offered the hour I needed it. There was only one place to fit it into my schedule, and I really wanted to take it! I took even more classes my junior year to give myself more flexibility.

Access: Why do you prefer Launch's flexible learning options?

E.C.: I spend so much time training that I really prefer the ability to determine my own schedule. If I train too late, I'm not going to be sleeping as well, and everything struggles because of that. With Launch, I'm able to do my school work at night time, and that gives me more control over both school and training.

Access: Walk me through a typical day in your life.

E.C.: Last year I would wake up around 8 a.m., eat breakfast and take some time to journal and get my day planned. Then I would train from about 9 to noon, eat lunch and then go to school for my two seated classes. I'd come home around 4, have a quick snack, train until 7 p.m., have dinner and spend about 3 hours working on my online classes. This year will look a little different, though, because I'll be full-time online with Launch.

Access: How did you get started training with CrossFit?

E.C.: My dad started CrossFit in 2014. He would always come

home and tell me about his workouts, and I'd grab a broomstick and milk jugs and do my own versions of them. One day he said "You know there's a kid's class, right?" I went, and it turned out that I really found my passion.

Access: Where do you find your motivation?

E.C.: Right after I started with CrossFit, I decided that I wanted to be the best that I could be. A few months later, I learned that competition was an option. I went and watched a local competition, and I thought, 'Wow, these people are amazing!' I've always been a very competitive person, and at that moment I thought, 'I don't just want to compete. I want to be the best.' I have that same belief with my school work. If I'm struggling with a class, that makes me want to succeed even more.

Access: What competitions have you participated in?

E.C.: I started competing at local and regional competitions when I was about 12. I did my first major competition, which was at the CrossFit Games, in 2019. That's when I competed in the 14-15 age division and won the title of "Fittest Teen on Earth." The games were canceled in 2020 because of Covid, and this year, 2021, was my final year being eligible for the teen division. I decided not to go that route, though, because I wanted to push myself more. I decided to compete in the women's category—most of the women were 25 to 30.

Access: What was it like competing against women who were so much older than you?

E.C.: Well, there were 150,000 women participating in the open this year, which was the first stage. I made it through that and



two more stages and am now in the top 40. I'll be competing in the final round at the end of July. It's really different competing with people older than me, but it isn't intimidating, because I know that I have worked just as hard or even harder to get there, and I feel that I deserve it just as much or even more than everyone else.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Emma did well and placed 16th overall in the July competition. Great job, Emma!

Access: What's your favorite thing about CrossFit?

E.C.: I've met so many amazing people my age throughout this sport. These people understand me on so many levels. I think this is a sport that brings out the best in everyone.

Access: What's your favorite thing about Launch?

E.C.: Definitely the schedule flexibility. I love having the option to get ahead on my rest days, which are always Sundays. That way I have a little more time to breathe throughout the week. Also, I do a lot of traveling for competitions and training camps, and I love being able to get ahead before I leave instead of having to catch up when I get back.

Access: What is it like to work with Launch teachers?

E.C.: I have really liked all the Launch teachers I've had so far. They're always really good with questions and being able to explain things over text. In some ways, it's been almost better for me, because there isn't always someone for me to ask immediate questions to. I'm forced to ask my own questions and do my own research. I think sometimes that helps me

understand things a little more fully.

Access: What do you do in your free time?

E.C.: I love to read sports psychology. Even when I'm relaxing, I like to feel productive and like I'm learning. And reading something that applies so directly to me is really cool.

Access: What did you learn about yourself during the pandemic?

E.C.: I learned that I really love having a routine! It was easy during the first part of quarantine for me to feel like I had plenty of time to do everything, but really I felt like I was wasting a lot of time. Then it would come to the end of the day and I wouldn't get things accomplished that I wanted. I think that's why I've done so well in online classes—I can make time for what will benefit me later.

Access: What would you recommend to other students who are considering taking Launch courses?

E.C.: I would tell other students to really know themselves and know if they're self motivated. If they're not, I'd tell them to figure out ways to work on that and to hold themselves accountable. You have to want to learn, want to grow and want to get better, and you can't do those things if you're not pushing yourself.

Access: If you could choose one superpower, what would it be?

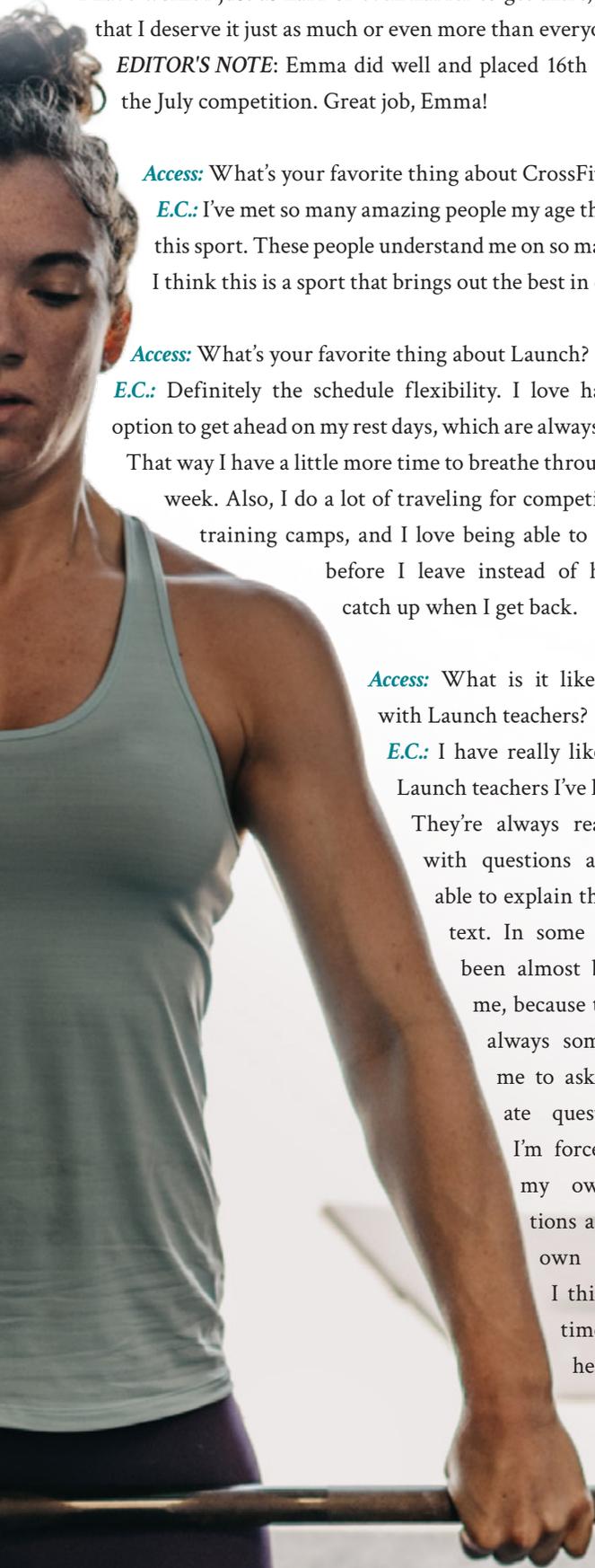
E.C.: I would love to be able to give my younger self advice, so maybe time travel. I would go back and warn myself that there will be a lot of lows in this journey, but I'd also encourage myself to understand that this will really be the time when I grow—when I'm struggling. I'd tell myself to find opportunity in the setbacks, because they don't have to define me.

Access: What's your favorite social media?

E.C.: Instagram is all I have, so Instagram!

Access: What are you looking forward to for your senior year?

E.C.: Keeping the momentum going in my training. By being full-time Launch I'll be able to have complete control of my day. I know that when I'm able to be the best in the gym, I can maximize what I'm capable of in all areas of my life. ■



Moving Full-Time Online

Launch English teacher Airin Bassett shares how her passion for virtual learning led her to a full-time job with Launch after spending 17 years in the classroom.

I've had the opportunity to teach for Launch as an adjunct instructor for the last four years. Now I'm leaving Ava, a district where I've been for 17 years, to join the Launch team full-time this fall. I started out as an English teacher in Ava, and I loved it—I taught English I, II and III, and then I took on a variety of different roles—I was doing yearbook, newspaper, I was teaching coding at one point—so I really wore a lot of different hats. And while I really enjoyed my time there, I'm also really excited to be able to focus on one content area this fall!

I first learned about Launch at the GOCS D Innovation Summit years ago. I remember hearing Dr. Lemmon speak about this idea that learning doesn't have to be limited by your zip code. That was huge for me. I came from a small town and I taught in a small district—there are some really great kids and really great minds out there who don't have a chance to grow or experience things because their school is too small. I knew then that I wanted to be a part of Launch.



Launch English teacher Airin Bassett enjoys spending her free time with her family (above; see her family pictured at the creek below).

I started teaching adjunct Launch classes in 2018. After my first training session, I thought, 'Man, this is my bag! I really enjoy this!' I'm a tech person but I'm also a people person, and I loved the blending of those two things with Launch. Once I got in, I didn't want to quit.

I had my first experience teaching live Launch classes this summer, and I'll be teaching Launch Live classes this fall. It's great, because as a teacher you always want

to have that real-time instruction—and that's what isn't as easily available in a virtual classroom—so being able to provide it is awesome! I'll walk through the student's assignments with them, and we'll visit about how it applies to our lives. For the students who want this interaction and who need a sense of community, it is so beneficial.

The biggest thing I like about teaching for Launch is the flexibility we provide, and the fact that we're meeting students where they are. As education is continually shifting, we need to meet kids wherever they are. Maybe their situation involves a lot of practices, or maybe they're involved in a production. Well, we can give them flexibility and freedom to do these things and still provide them with a quality education. This isn't just some computer program where kids are checking boxes and moving on—this is really teaching, and it's really good for kids. I love that, and that's why I wanted to be a part of the Launch team. ■



Airin Bassett

High School English Teacher

Home District: Springfield R-XII
Years in Education: 17

Degree: Bachelors degree, English
Fun Fact: Airin and her husband are foster parents, and they've cared for 12 children in their home (and in addition to their own) over the years.

Behind the Scenes

We joined Student Information System Coordinator Jessica Johnson for a day of publishing grades, placing students and continually remastering the master schedule.



7:39 a.m.: Launch SIS Coordinator Jessica Johnson turns her chair away from her desk and takes a quick break from responding to emails. It's time for "Positive Morning Minute," a daily discussion her team has at the start of every day. During the chat, each team member shares something they're happy or excited about.

"My youngest is finally potty trained!," Jessica says. She's referring to her 3-year-old son, Carter.

9:12 a.m.: "We just filled another section!" Jessica says, pointing at her computer screen. Jessica is chatting with Helen Williams, Launch's assistant principal who oversees elementary school. The two are placing students who were recently enrolled in the fall 2021 semester. As SIS Coordinator, one of Jessica's main responsibilities is building and maintaining the master schedule. "Monitoring the master schedule plays a big part in ensuring student and teacher placements," Jessica says.

11:52 a.m.: Lunch time! Jessica grabs a couple of work pals and heads out to order one of her favorite meals—a Spicy Chicken Deluxe sandwich and waffle fries. "It's Chick-fil-A Wednesday!" she says.

1:03 p.m.: After answering a few emails, Jessica begins auditing student demographics. "I make sure MOSIS ID numbers match our previous records and compare each birthday, first and last name and guardian," she says.



2:51 p.m.: Jessica stands up at her desk and shares an exciting announcement. "All grades are published for partners!," she says. Jessica leads the team that publishes grades at the end of every quarter, and they just finished publishing final grades for the June summer session. "If you receive a call from a partner who needs help accessing their grades, the enrollment team can help!"

3 p.m.: Jessica meets with the secretary team for their daily check in. "We discuss pending enrollments, review the enroll email inbox and talk about any common questions we're getting," Jessica says. "Today I'm also going to talk with Raegan about our drop process." Another part of Jessica's role is dropping students who are inactive or not participating after Launch's 20-day window closes.

4:17 p.m.: After Jessica finishes checking her email, she shuts her computer down for the day. Next she's going to exercise, then she'll head home to her husband and two sons. "I try to fit in a workout right after work," Jessica says. "It's time for some rock climbing, then another night with the boys!" ■

Recovery Refresh

Learn the multiple ways Launch credit recovery teachers are providing enhanced student support.



At Launch, we believe in a culture of continuous improvement. We're proud of our high-quality courses, but we still look for ways they can be even better. We serve thousands of learners, but we continually add services to educate a broader population. And while we already offer a full catalog of credit recovery courses (CRC), we made it our mission to enhance the credit recovery student experience.

"We wanted to be able to provide as much support as possible to our most at-risk students," says Launch Assistant Principal Nicole Welch. "The pandemic put extra stress on a lot of students, and we wanted to find additional ways to help."

Nicole joined a team of fellow Launch assistant principals to revamp Launch's CRC delivery model in spring 2021. Launch credit recovery teachers began providing additional services with the

summer 2021 semester. Moving forward, these expanded credit recovery services will continue to be provided to Launch students.

Expanded Teacher Support

Launch credit recovery students are supported by teachers certified in the course(s) content area, and since the start of the summer 2021 semester, there are a lot more of these teachers on staff. "A lot of times, parents and students will call and text me on my Google Voice number," says Launch Credit Recovery teacher Chris Davis. Chris began supporting students enrolled in Launch's history credit recovery courses in summer 2021. "By making it easier for kids and parents to connect, we're increasing the chance of student success," Chris says. Teachers also regularly call home when students are not participating.

Instructional Support

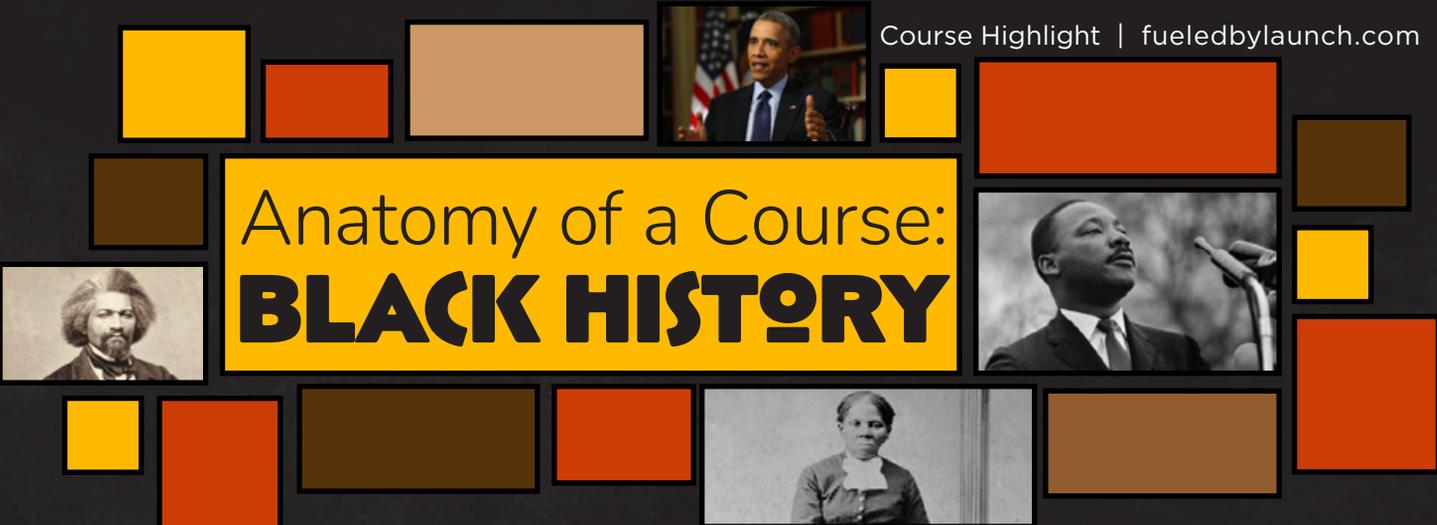
Launch credit recovery teachers host open student hours every week. "Students are invited to come to these sessions to ask questions or to ask for help on particular topics they may be struggling with," Nicole says. Teachers also host regular instructional support sessions in which they provide deeper instruction on topics that multiple students may find challenging.

Enhanced Instructional Announcements

Launch credit recovery teachers now include instructional support within their teacher announcements. "Just like the instructional support sessions, these announcements will often relate to topics that multiple students find challenging," Nicole says. ■



Launch credit recovery teacher Chris Davis says supporting students is his top priority.



Anatomy of a Course: **BLACK HISTORY**

Launch's new Black History course explores, studies and highlights significant moments in Black history by sharing stories, music, the arts and culture.

Launch's digital development team partnered with the Department of Equity and Diversity at Springfield Public Schools to write our new Black History course. "We wanted to ensure this course was looked at from a variety of perspectives," says Springfield Public Schools Curriculum Coordinator Amanda Bodenstein. "I worked with Launch to write and design the online curriculum, and then we turned to the department of Equity and Diversity for their review and feedback." The result is a well-rounded elective that shares an overview of the Black American experience from 1500 to the present.

A Series of Stories

At the beginning of the course, students are placed into small groups for a collaborative project: they must create a series of newsletters or news articles that tell the story of Black history. "The students are able to pick their own topics—it just has to be something that is covered in the unit," Amanda says. The students submit their news articles throughout the entire course and have a total of 10 submissions. "We wanted the students to synthesize their learning from beginning to end," Amanda says.

Have a Ball!

As students learn the origins of major league baseball in America, they also learn that a majority of players were African American. "Students choose an early Black baseball player, research them, and share what their life was like outside of baseball," Amanda says.

Ending on a Positive Note

"We knew we wanted to end this course with a celebration of black culture," Amanda says. During the course's final unit, Celebrating the New Millennium, students celebrate how Black Americans have contributed to America in regards to the arts; athletics; politics; entrepreneurship & business; music; literature and film. "For the final project, students watch *Black Panther* and reflect on the ways the film demonstrates African culture as both traditional

and innovative," Amanda says. "We then ask them to reflect on the course as a whole and end by asking how race relations have changed in America and what is signified by having a Black man as a superhero."

Women of Wonder

As Amanda and her team worked to develop the course, they wanted to ensure that women were highlighted as well. "This wasn't just about highlighting Black American men," Amanda says. "For example, as we studied the world wars, we didn't just highlight the men who were fighting for America. We talked about how Black women were fighting on the home front. We made an intentional effort to make sure we included women in the story as well."

Survey Says

Students who take Launch's Black History course are given both a pre-survey and a post-survey. "We want to gauge what they know beforehand and determine their level of interest," says Dr. Yvania Garcia-Pusateri, Springfield Public Schools Chief Equity and Diversity Officer. "The post-survey yields information regarding why Black history is important," Dr. Garcia-Pusateri says. "It's important to us that our Black students understand that Black excellence has always been an important part of history, and it's important to us that all students are learning the many ways Black individuals have contributed not only to America, but to the world." ■

COURSE FACTS:

Course Type: Elective

Credits: Half (0.5) credit course

Estimated Completion Time:

1 Semester/9-18 weeks

COURSE TOPICS:

Unit 1: African Communities & Culture

Unit 2: From the Atlantic Slave Trade to Emancipation

Unit 3: Patriotism Despite Segregation

Unit 4: Black Culture

Unit 5: Freedom Movement and Civil Rights

Unit 6: Celebrating the New Millennium

Versailles Goes Virtual

At the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Morgan County R-II School District partnered with Launch to provide expanded opportunities to Versailles Elementary, Middle and High School students.

Versailles students Ethan and Brayden Grider (below left; opposite) went online at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Their mother decided to go virtual because she had just had a new baby girl (below left).



When it was time for her two sons to return to school in Fall 2020, Rachel Grider was a bit hesitant. “I had just had their baby sister,” says Rachel. It was the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, which added an additional level of concern. “With all the risk of germs and a newborn, it just made more sense for us to go online,” Rachel says.

Luckily, the Morgan County R-II school district had just partnered with Launch, and they offered Launch virtual courses to all Versailles students for the fall 2020 semester. “The kids were home at the end of last year, but they weren’t learning virtually,” Rachel says. “The school sent home work packets to finish out the year. This was our first real experience with online learning.”

The Decision to Partner

The Grider family’s situation is the perfect example of why the Morgan Co. R-II school district decided to partner with Launch in August 2020. “We knew we had to find a way to provide instruction for students who didn’t feel comfortable or weren’t able to attend in person due to Covid,” says elementary principal Kimberly Murdock. “I’ve dealt with other MOCAP vendors before and never really felt confident in what they were providing. I really loved that Launch was developed and pioneered by Springfield Public Schools.”

Launch was the virtual solution for many students in the district, especially at the elementary level. “I think we started out with 40 to 50 elementary students,” says Kim. “We had a lot of students in the

upper elementary grades—grades 4 and 5—who went online.”

Brayden Grider was in 5th grade, and his little brother, Ethan, was in 3rd. “Things went pretty smooth for the boys overall,” their mother says. “I think they really enjoyed being able to see their classmates through the Zoom chat. Especially my youngest, because he’s really into making videos—or I should say, he loves being the center of attention in the videos he makes!”

A Teacher’s Perspective

Once Morgan Co. R-II made the decision to partner with Launch and shared that they would have a large number of K-5 learners, Launch asked if the district had any elementary teachers who would be willing to teach online. “We asked Rachel Faron, who was serving as a reading facilitator and instructional coach, if she would be willing to make the move,” Kimberly says. “Mrs. Faron is someone

“We knew we had to find a way to provide instruction for students who didn’t feel comfortable or weren’t able to attend in person due to Covid.”
—Kimberly Murdock,
Elementary Principal

who is always willing to be flexible and isn't afraid of risks. She said she'd give it a try, and she started teaching first grade with Launch last fall."

Mrs. Faron had spent an impressive 22 years in the classroom before she moved online, so she was a bit hesitant at first. "Never in my wildest dreams would I think that I'd end up teaching online," Mrs. Faron says. "But Launch was nothing but helpful and gave me all the resources I needed." Mrs. Faron taught students from Morgan Co. R-II during the fall 2020 semester, and then she taught a class made up of students from districts statewide in spring 2021. "I really enjoyed working with students from all over the

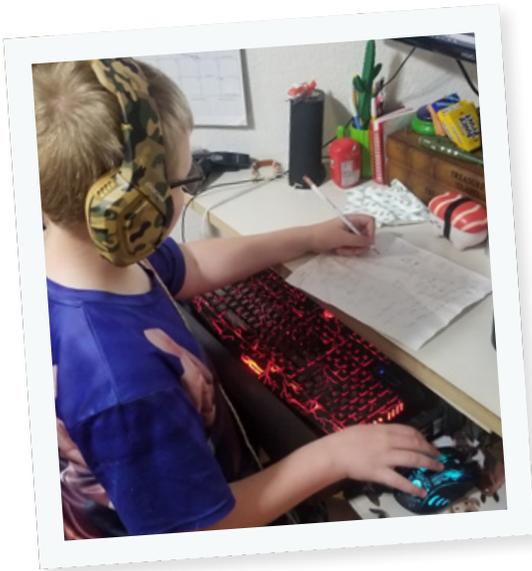
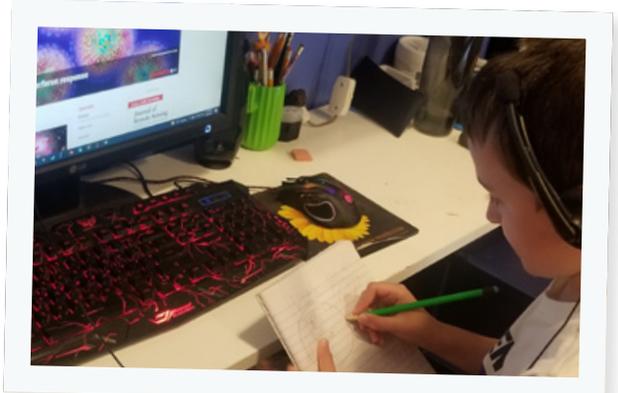
state," Mrs. Faron says. "I was really also pleasantly surprised with how the students quickly adapted and adjusted to what became their new normal."

Mrs. Faron says she was also impressed at how her students felt so connected and comfortable with one another. "I would move the students into breakout rooms so they could talk and connect," Mrs. Faron says. "I would go in and they'd be sharing personal stories. We did a lot of sharing time to get to know one another."

In addition, Mrs. Faron continually worked to find ways to keep students engaged—it's not exactly easy keeping 20 first grade students focused while they're working from home all day. "Launch was helpful with this, too," Mrs. Faron says. "The way the courses are set up is designed to give the students mini breaks. They'll do a lesson, then they'll spend some time working on adaptive software. There is a lunch break and some recess time built in."

As she thinks back on last year, Mrs. Faron appreciates the way Launch allowed her to connect with students, despite the fact that she wasn't in a

school building. "There's one student in particular that comes to mind," she says. "At school he was super shy and quiet and struggled to participate in class. Well, he became a different student online, and it was wonderful to see him open up." If given the chance, Mrs. Faron says she would teach for Launch again in the future. "I had a great experience overall," she says. "Launch truly is a really good program." ■



Morgan Co. R-II at a Glance

K-12 Enrollment: 1,362
Elementary School Population: 679
MASA District: West Central
Mascot: Tigers

Mission Statement: To achieve Tiger Excellence by uniting students, families, community, faculty and staff toward the common goals of lifetime success and learning.

Fun Fact: The Morgan Co. R-II School District covers approximately 209 square miles and includes the communities of Versailles, Gravois Mills, Laurie, Glensted and Excelsior.



A Student-Centered Focus

The Center 58 School District utilizes Launch’s credit recovery courses to ensure students stay on track for graduation.



Administrators at Center School District began looking for a virtual course provider in 2018. “Our superintendent at the time heard about Launch at a regional meeting, and Dr. Krista McGee, who is now our Virtual Learning Coordinator, heard about it from a friend in another district,” says Dr. Elizabeth Wilkerson-Arbisi, Executive Director of Academic Services. “After meeting with the Launch team and learning how the program could support the various needs of our students, we decided to partner the following school year.”

The district started strong, immediately utilizing Launch to provide students with credit recovery courses and expanded electives at the high

school level. In addition, they used Launch for any instance in which they didn’t have an instructor. “Being a smaller

school district, we may not always be able to accommodate all the courses a student may want or need to take,” Dr. Wilkerson-Arbisi says. “Launch helps us support these students’ needs.” During the COVID-19 pandemic, Center began offering Launch courses to elementary and middle school students as well.

Administrators at the Center 58 School District partnered with Launch in 2019. The district allows students to take both traditional virtual and credit recovery courses.



The Utilization of Credit Recovery

Dr. Wilkerson-Arbisi says one of the features that initially attracted the Center School District to Launch was the full suite of Credit Recovery courses. “We have a lot of transient students—many who come in and out of our district

“Being a smaller school district, we may not always be able to accommodate all the courses a student may want or need to take. Launch helps us support these students’ needs.”
—Dr. Wilkerson-Arbisi

rather quickly,” Dr. Wilkerson-Arbisi says. “Sometimes those kids need credits. Launch gives us the ability to try to get those students on track. Also, it helps our students who may have fallen behind. We don’t want to penalize students for mistakes they may have made early in their high school careers. Launch allows us to get students where they need to be and helps us ensure they can graduate with their cohort.”

Sa’Tera Ellison-Townsend is living proof that Center’s utilization of Launch Credit Recovery courses benefits students. “I had trouble focusing in school, so then I started going to Center Alternative,” Sa’Tera says. “I used Launch to get back on track and graduate. I think I had a total of eight Launch classes. They told me I wouldn’t graduate if I didn’t do this. That gave me determination to just sit down and focus.”

Sa’Tera typically worked on her Launch classes at home in the evenings, and she

often turned to Dr. McGee for help. “She was so helpful to me the entire time,” Sa’Tera says. “I would text her when I had questions, and she would always help me finish.”

Hiring a Full-Time Virtual Learning Coordinator

As Center School District’s Launch student enrollment increased, so did the support the district provided for its virtual students. “Dr. McGee acted as our Student Success Coordinator, which provided her the opportunity to work with students in Launch,” Dr. Wilkerson-Arbisi says. “Since then, our program has expanded. Dr. McGee is now the district’s Virtual Learning Coordinator. She will be available to work with all of our virtual students.”

Dr. McGee’s passion is helping all students, so the role fits perfectly. In addition to helping individuals who find themselves behind on credits—like Sa’Tera—Dr. McGee is passionate about helping learners with other needs as well. “Launch provides a quality education for all of our students, whether they are an athlete, college-bound, an advanced learner or anything in between,” Dr. McGee says. “It has allowed our students to take advantage of the flexibility and learn according to their learning styles. It is truly an education that fits the students needs.” ■



Center 58 at a Glance

- K-12 Enrollment:** 2,630
- High School Population:** 665
- MASA District:** Greater Kansas City
- School Colors:** Blue and Yellow
- Mascot:** The Yellowjackets
- Fun Fact:** Nestled in the heart of south Kansas City, Center School District has been described as a “boutique” school district with the advantage of high performance and a diverse student population in a small setting.





LAUNCH

NEX

As requests for virtual learning options continually increase, a need to expand Launch services beyond traditional virtual courses and content continues to emerge. Enter Launch Next, our largest-ever program expansion that provides an array of new virtual learning opportunities for Missouri students in grades K-12.



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LAUNCH CARES

NEW COMPREHENSIVE COUNSELING MODEL

Launch put two full-time, national board certified counselors in place to provide virtual students with many of the same services offered in a school building.

Most people aren't surprised to learn that Launch saw a significant increase in full-time virtual student enrollments as a result of the pandemic. But even now that schools have opened back up, our number of full-time virtual students has continued to grow. To better serve this population of virtual learners, Launch now has two nationally certified counselors in place to support partner district students. The team will debut a variety of services through Launch Cares, Launch's new K-12 Comprehensive Counseling Program designed to meet the diverse needs of our virtual learners.

Both David Schuman and Silvia Espinosa worked as school counselors in Missouri school districts prior to joining Launch. David has worked for Launch for three years, and Silvia is entering her second year with the program. The two are excited to be a part of the expanded counseling program and look forward to supporting districts and students statewide.

"We don't only want to be a provider of virtual courses for our school partners," says David, whose focus is helping Launch's secondary students. "We want

to be a source of knowledge and resources for our districts, students and families." And of course, they want to ensure students are supported in all areas as they choose to learn online. "Launch Cares is an integral part of our virtual education opportunity," Silvia says. "If a student is struggling with social skills, or understanding their emotions, or maybe they're going through a difficult time—these things all act as distractions and present challenges that directly impact the student's academic performance. Our goal is to provide students and their families mental health support while they are learning with us."

NEW COUNSELING OPPORTUNITIES

Launch Cares is designed to meet our diverse students' social emotional needs right where they are and equip them with the skills needed to achieve their personal, academic and career goals. It includes content-rich SEL curriculum, individual and small group responsive services, parent and student engagement initiatives, and partner school counselor support. Launch students may utilize these new counseling services at no additional cost.

CURRICULUM

Both David and Silvia will offer students synchronous and asynchronous lessons to support social-emotional learning, positive mental health development and career development. Silvia, who focuses on supporting elementary (K-5) learners, will visit virtual classrooms and provide live lessons on various SEL curriculum-related topics. At the secondary level, David will host open lunch discussion sessions and schedule individual appointments. The team will use DESE's School Counseling Curriculum & GLEs as they design, develop and deliver their lessons.

MENTAL HEALTH

To better support the mental health of Launch's virtual students, both David and Silvia will offer live, synchronous counseling services in both individual and small group settings. Parents may also request student support through Launch's new parent portal. After meeting with students individually and providing short-term services, Launch counselors may refer the family to an external source for continued support.

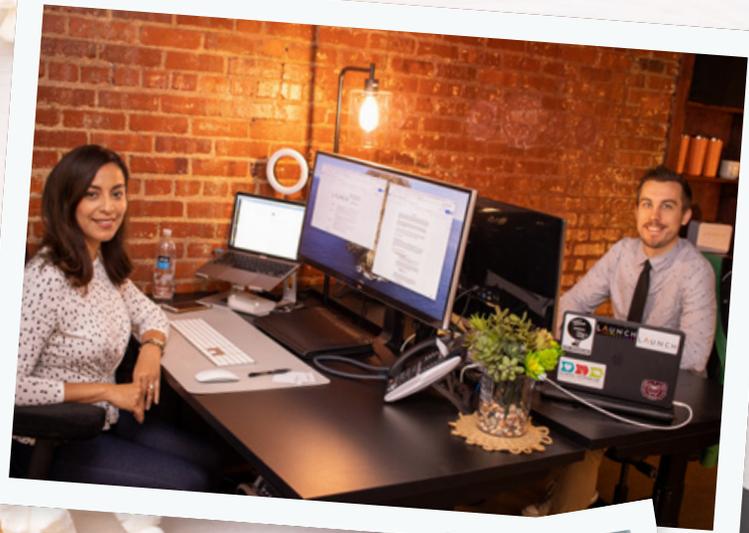
PARENT SUPPORT

David and Silvia will implement student and parent onboarding processes to develop connections between Launch and families. After kicking things off with Launch Back to School and Spring into Launch parent onboarding sessions (offered at the start of each semester), the counselors will provide continued family support with monthly education series webinars. Webinars are geared specifically with caregivers in mind as they navigate the parenting journey. Topics of mental health and wellbeing will be explored using researched-based, standards-aligned, and digital SEL resources to offer candid insights on what it means to parent today. Parents can sign up for all of these sessions through the new parent portal.

COUNSELOR SUPPORT & PD

David and Silvia will use their experience both from working at Launch and from working as school counselors in Missouri school districts to provide professional development opportunities for secondary counselors. The focus of all sessions will be to provide counselors with the tools they need to support online learners. "Our goal is to connect with our partner school counselors and be a resource for them," David says. "We'll keep counselors up to date with Launch course information, services available to students and best practices in supporting virtual learners."

Launch counselors Silvia Espinosa and David Schuman (below) are dedicated to serving Launch students statewide fulltime.



LAUNCH

Live

In addition to offering full-time synchronous programming for elementary students, Launch now offers a catalog of live course opportunities for grades 6-12.

While Launch's flexible scheduling opportunities and asynchronous courses work great for many virtual learners, there are still students who prefer live instruction. "One of our recent student surveys showed that nearly 20 percent of our students were interested in live course opportunities," says Launch Director Dr. Nichole Lemmon. "That's a large percentage of students. After learning this number, we began having conversations about how Launch could deliver synchronous learning options at the secondary level."

Launch developed a Launch Live work team to think through all the many aspects that come with releasing a new delivery method. After deciding on a catalog of core courses for grades 6-12, the team began mapping out a schedule of classes. And while all teachers offered live courses with the summer 2021 semester, the entire catalog will open to partners for the fall 2021 semester.

LIVE COURSE AVAILABILITY

Launch Live class sizes are limited so that Launch Live teachers are able to best-serve students. Due to limited seats, waiting list may occur. Students who are waiting on a Launch Live class will be enrolled in the asynchronous version of the course to allow for easy transfer, should a seat become available. The cost per course is the same as other Launch courses.

PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

While Launch Live courses will meet three times per week, learners must attend live lessons at least 2 times per week. If a student does not regularly attend their live lessons, they will be transferred to an asynchronous version of the same course following attendance intervention processes.

LAUNCH LIVE COURSE LISTING

Middle School

- English Language Arts 6th Grade
- English Language Arts 7th Grade
- English Language Arts 8th Grade
- Math 6th Grade
- Math 7th Grade
- Math 8th Grade
- Social Studies 6th Grade
- Social Studies 7th Grade
- Social Studies 8th Grade
- Science 6th Grade
- Science 7th Grade
- Science 8th Grade

High School:

- English I
- English II
- English III
- English IV
- Foundations of Algebra
- Algebra I
- Geometry
- Algebra II
- US History
- World History
- Government
- Intro to Biology
- Biology
- Earth Science
- Physical Science



EXCEPTIONAL LEARNER

Services

Launch built out its full-time and teaching support staffs to begin offering special education services and gifted education services to virtual students statewide.

GIFTED SERVICES

It wasn't too long ago that Dr. Lenae Lazzelle, Director of Gifted Education at Springfield Public Schools, shared a startling statistic with Launch Director Dr. Nichole Lemmon: Nearly 60 percent of Missouri school districts do not offer gifted education services for students. "That's a part of what makes this such a huge opportunity for Launch," Dr. Lazzelle says. "We're providing a service to students that's not offered by their home school district."

Launch's new gifted education services will be available to students in grades 1-8. The courses were developed in the same fashion as all Launch virtual courses are—members of Launch's digital development team met with curriculum specialists and, in this case, teachers certified in gifted education, to write the curriculum. They worked to create coursework that is above the student's traditional grade level and outside of what they may learn in the classroom. "A lot of times, people think that gifted programming is just providing additional work or building on what's offered in the classroom," Dr. Lazzelle says. "But that's not what it is at all, and that's not what we're doing here. The point is to provide topics of interest to the students, create choices that feed their imaginations and provide course work that challenges them."

In addition to offering students outside-of-the-box choices, Launch's gifted programming will also offer students something that all gifted students need: camaraderie. "When we're talking about gifted students, one of the most important things we can provide is a peer group," Dr. Lazzelle says. "I'm super excited about the opportunity this gives to gifted students across the

state of Missouri. These courses give students in smaller districts a chance to connect, exchange ideas and build relationships with ability-level peers from all over. It's definitely a win-win, both for Launch and for gifted students statewide."

ADDITIONAL DETAILS

Launch offers gifted education services to virtual students who qualify for gifted programming. Students must have the state-recommended IQ score at or above the 95th percentile on an individual intelligence test. All courses are taught by teachers certified in gifted education and include weekly live lessons to allow students to connect with peers. Courses include 160 minutes per week of instruction and incorporate lessons in affective development and thinking skills. The cost per course is the same as other Launch courses.

LAUNCH GIFTED COURSES

Grades 1-2:

- Quarter 1: Paleontology
- Quarter 2: Mysteries
- Quarter 3: Oceanography
- Quarter 4: Fairy Tales

Grades 3-5:

- Quarter 1: Citizen Scientist
- Quarter 2: Around the World
- Quarter 3 & 4: Coming Soon!

Grades 6-8:

- Semester 1: TedEd Student Talks (In collaboration with the Ted Talk International organization)
- Semester 2: Mission to Mars

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

Sit down at a table with Josh Douglas and Amy Bollinger, and you'll feel like you've entered a conversation decades in the making. "We've been friends since our sophomore year in high school," says Amy. Next Josh chimes in. "Parkview Vikings, class of 1996!" he says. The two both laugh. They're funny. They're inviting. They're engaging. And that's exactly why they're the perfect pair to co-teach some of Launch's special education courses next fall.

"I've spent the bulk of my career working as the special education department chair in Republic," says Amy, who was hired as Launch's Special Education Liaison last fall. Since joining the Launch team, Amy has worked with Launch's special education students to help provide modifications and accommodations, and she played a crucial role in developing special education services for partners.

Launch's new special education services will be available to high school students and include co-taught courses—like the courses that will be taught by Amy and Josh, along with other certified special education and content teachers—as well direct service courses. Direct service courses require live attendance during weekly synchronous lessons. "We're going to be offering specially designed instruction to meet IEP goals," Amy says. "Not only are we structuring these classes to align with Missouri Learning Standards, but we're also going to be collecting data to look at student progress towards IEP goals. If you are a partner district and you are case managing a kiddo in one of Launch's special education courses, you can count IEP minutes, because these courses are being delivered by a certified special education teacher." This is just one of the many benefits of Launch's new special education service courses. "I think another benefit is simply the engagement this provides for kids," Josh says. "We still don't know what next year is going to look like, and a lot of kids are going to be learning at home. Being around others is really important for the communication needs of special education students. This gives them that opportunity."

Offering special education services at this level is a first for Launch, and according to Amy's research, perhaps the first for any program in the nation. "I did the research, and I cannot find anywhere in Missouri, or even in the nation, that offers the types of specialized services that we will be offering virtually," Amy says. "And that's so exciting for me, because we're creating something

brand new so that all kids in the state of Missouri can have access to online school."

ADDITIONAL DETAILS

Special education services will be available to both full-time virtual and per-course students with mild/moderate disabilities that require accommodations, modifications and specially designed instruction in ELA and/or Math. These services will be available in courses required for graduation, and applicable students should have Individual Education Plans that require the above-mentioned services. All services include specially-designed instruction, data collection, progress monitoring and regular communication between Launch and the student's home school district. IEP case management will remain the responsibility of the partner district. The cost per course is the same as other Launch courses.

CO-TAUGHT COURSES

- English I, II, III, IV
- Foundations of Algebra
- Algebra IA
- Algebra IB
- US History
- World History
- Government
- Intro to Biology
- Earth Science
- Physical Science

DIRECT SERVICE COURSES

- English I Strategies
- English II Strategies
- English III Strategies
- English IV Strategies
- Foundations of Algebra Strategies
- Algebra IA Strategies
- Algebra IB Strategies



Launch's Special Education Liaison Amy Bollinger co-teaches special education courses with Launch teacher Josh Douglas (above).

THE DEFINITION OF STRONG

After being bullied, having a baby and becoming pregnant with her second child, 18-year-old Joriesha Shelton utilized Launch courses to help earn her high school diploma.

Joriesha Shelton has fond memories of her middle school years. “I absolutely loved going to Reed,” Joriesha says, referencing her days at Springfield’s Reed Academy. “Reed was the best school ever.”

Joriesha continues talking, explaining a seemingly picturesque childhood in which she always looked forward to attending her classes every day. “I loved school, and I still love school,” Joriesha says. And then she says it again. “I loved school, and I never wanted to be a dropout.” But after she started getting bullied in her late middle school years, things changed.

Joriesha soon began her freshman year at Springfield’s Parkview High School, and the same bullying situation—which never really stopped—escalated to the next level. “She hit me,” Joriesha says, thinking back on the incident that changed her entire school career. “She hit me, and I fought back.”



Determined to Succeed

Recent Launch graduate Joriesha Shelton had a baby before she started her senior year (pictured) and is now pregnant with her second child.

FINDING AN ALTERNATIVE PATH

After the fight, Joriesha knew she never wanted to return to Parkview High School again. “I just knew it wasn’t going to end,” Joriesha says. Determined, Joriesha began advocating for herself and looking for alternative solutions. “I knew I wanted to finish school, I just wasn’t sure how I would get there at that point,” she says.

Joriesha heard about Springfield’s Study Alternative Center from both her cousin and a friend. She really liked the idea of attending an alternative school with smaller class sizes and more one-on-one interactions with her teachers. “I felt like Study was the place I needed to be,” Joriesha says. “I talked to Ms. Welch, my assistant principal at Parkview, to see if she could help me get in.” Joriesha soon found herself walking the halls of Study and happily attending school again. “But then Covid hit, and we never went back after Spring Break that year,” Joriesha says.

A CHANGE OF COURSE

When it was time for Joriesha to return to school the following fall, she had to make some big choices, as she recently had some big changes occur. “After talking to my advisor, I called my counselor,” Joriesha says. “I told him I was pregnant, and he walked me through my options.” Joriesha could go back to Study Alternative Center, or she could take courses online with Launch. After taking some time to think about what may be best, she decided to give online courses a try. “My counselor told me he thought Launch would be a good option for me,” Joriesha says. “He said, ‘You’re smart, and I know you can do it. So I said, ‘Well, okay, if you really believe that, I’ll try it.’”

At six months pregnant, Joriesha began her Launch journey with a plan to prepare for and take the Missouri HiSet. “Matt helped me out so much,” she says of Matt Burke, Launch’s Graduation Advisor. “He knew I didn’t have transportation, so he would come and pick me up to take me to study sessions. He’d come around twice a week, every week. I’d come in, and I’d work with him and other students.”

After passing three of the five HiSet Exams, Joriesha’s pregnancy was deemed high-risk. She took a six-week break from school at the time, and then gave birth to a happy, healthy baby in January 2021. “But once I went back, I still had to take the Math and Science tests,” Joriesha says. “Well, I never passed the math exam.”



The Next Chapter
Although Joriesha did not pass her final Hi-Set exam, she continued to look for a way to earn her high school diploma. “Like I said, I never wanted to drop out of school,” Joriesha says. “I knew I wanted to graduate. And at that time, I wanted to graduate even more for my daughter. I was going to do everything I could to make it happen.”

After talking with Launch’s counselor David Schuman, Joriesha learned she could utilize Launch credit recovery courses to earn the credits she needed to graduate—and she also learned she was pregnant with her second child. But again, this did not stop her. “I started coming to the Launch building to work every single day,” she says. “Even with the baby, and even with me being pregnant again. I’d come in and work, because that’s the one way I knew I would make myself do it.”

Fast forward to summer 2021, and Joriesha is now a high school graduate who will walk in a graduation ceremony at the end of the summer. “And then, after I have my baby, I’m going to go to college,” Joriesha says. “I’ve always wanted to be a pre-school teacher.” And while Joriesha is super excited to put on a cap and gown and be handed the high school diploma that she worked so incredibly hard to earn, she’s even more excited about going to college and building her future. “I feel like the first few years of school are when you really build character,” Joriesha says, explaining why she wants to be a pre-school teacher. “I remember

a lot from my kindergarten teacher, especially how much I looked up to her. I just want to be that person for kids, because every kid needs someone to look up to. Bad influences are everywhere, but when you have that one good influence, that can change a lot.” ■



Serving Up Success

Last year, full-time virtual fifth grader Isabella Oliva spent her free time helping her mom operate a food truck.

Ask most kids how they spent their free-time during the pandemic, and you'll be delivered with a lot of the same—sleeping. Watching TV. Lounging in their PJs. But not Isabella Oliva. After Isabella went full-time online for her 5th grade year, she had a new schedule of connecting with her virtual teachers from 8 to 3, and then connecting with the public—behind a mask, of course—as she worked after-hours at her mom's food truck. "I'd work the cash register, mostly," says Isabella, who plans to return to a seated schedule this fall but will continue helping her mom in the truck. "I like talking to people, and I like making money!"

While Isabella is excited to return to school and reconnect with her friends, she admits there are a couple of things she'll miss about her full-time virtual schedule. "I got to sleep in until 8, which I really liked," she says. "Also, if I got done with my work early, I could log off for the day. And I got to stay in a tee shirt and shorts, under a blanket!" Isabella's mom, Jessica, feels similar. "She's a social child, so I'm excited she'll get to be around other kids again," Jessica says. "But this worked perfectly for us and what we needed at the time. I'm so grateful she had the opportunity to go online with Launch." ■



Fueled By

LAUNCH

MEMBER DISTRICT DIRECTORY

Below are the Missouri school districts who are partnered with Launch to help give all Missouri students equal course access.

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