

Lovett students design ankle foot orthosis in STEM classes



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Pictured (l to r) are Jackson Rogers, Tyler Perritt, Beaux Smith and teacher Emma McMahon.



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Students at Lovett Elementary School are already putting their problem-solving skills to the test in their sixth grade STEM classes.

Tasked with designing and building an ankle foot orthosis, the students had to work as a team to complete the challenge.

“This is the first lesson in our

“Project Lead the Way” curriculum,” first-year STEM teacher Emma McMahon said. “We start out with this task first, because the point is to teach them about the design process.”

Each group is given a list of seven criteria their prototype must meet, including comfort, function and practicality.

“We’ve yet to study the design process, so the goal is to get the stu-

dents to figure out how to construct the ankle foot orthosis by being creative problem solvers,” McMahon said. “They can use cardboard, duct tape, masking tape, brass fasteners, pipe cleaners, rubber bands and foam.”

McMahon said assigning such a challenging project as the first assignment of the school year is done intentionally. It reinforces critical

thinking skills and teamwork.

“This project has been a multiday project, so they’re doing a great job with time management and being adaptable,” McMahon said. “I was told to expect a lot out of these students, and I’ve seen that they truly have so much potential. They have worked through getting frustrated, figuring out how to overcome a challenge and truly work together.”

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A photograph of a man in a red polo shirt standing in front of a large stack of cardboard boxes. The boxes have various labels, including "DO NOT TRUCK THIS SIDE", "12\"", "LENNOX", and "USE 21\"/>