

Eagle Cap Innovative High School

Two different programs designed to meet unique needs of students

Two unique programs are meeting student needs at Eagle Cap Innovative High School.

One is geared toward self-directed students who prefer to work at a different pace than traditional classrooms, completing courses through an online platform.

"They can accelerate by focusing on one course at a time," said Dr. Thomas Joseph, director of specific secondary programs at Eagle Cap.

The students have access to a teacher if they need help, and can design their day with a flexible schedule.

"Some like to put in their time and then go to work," Joseph said.

He said Eagle Cap has a modified daily schedule, which allows some students to arrive as early as 7 a.m. There can be as many as 10 different schedules among the students.

"Another way to be innovative is to be flexible on the schedule," he said.

The second program at Eagle Cap is designed for students who need a different approach for their education.

Eighteen students are enrolled, and each has a personalized education plan.

This course of study is a student driven, project-based approach with hands-on applications.

"We're tapping into their interest," Joseph said. "Everybody gets an individualized plan based on where they're at developmentally."

Once an interest or passion is

identified, Joseph and teacher Annetta Evans craft an individual course of study that wraps core subjects around that topic.

"We're trying to engage the student in something they enjoy," Joseph said.

In Evans' words, "We are trying to make school fit the kid, not make the kid fit school."

She is starting her 27th year of teaching.

"I am absolutely excited about the possibilities of this program," she said. "I love project-based learning because of the integration and real-world application of ideas and concepts. There are so many opportunities for students to ask and answer the questions that are relevant to them, their community, and the world."

Each student is encouraged to select his or her own subject to study as a project. While focusing on a particular interest, the student completes tasks related to core subjects such as language arts, math, or science.

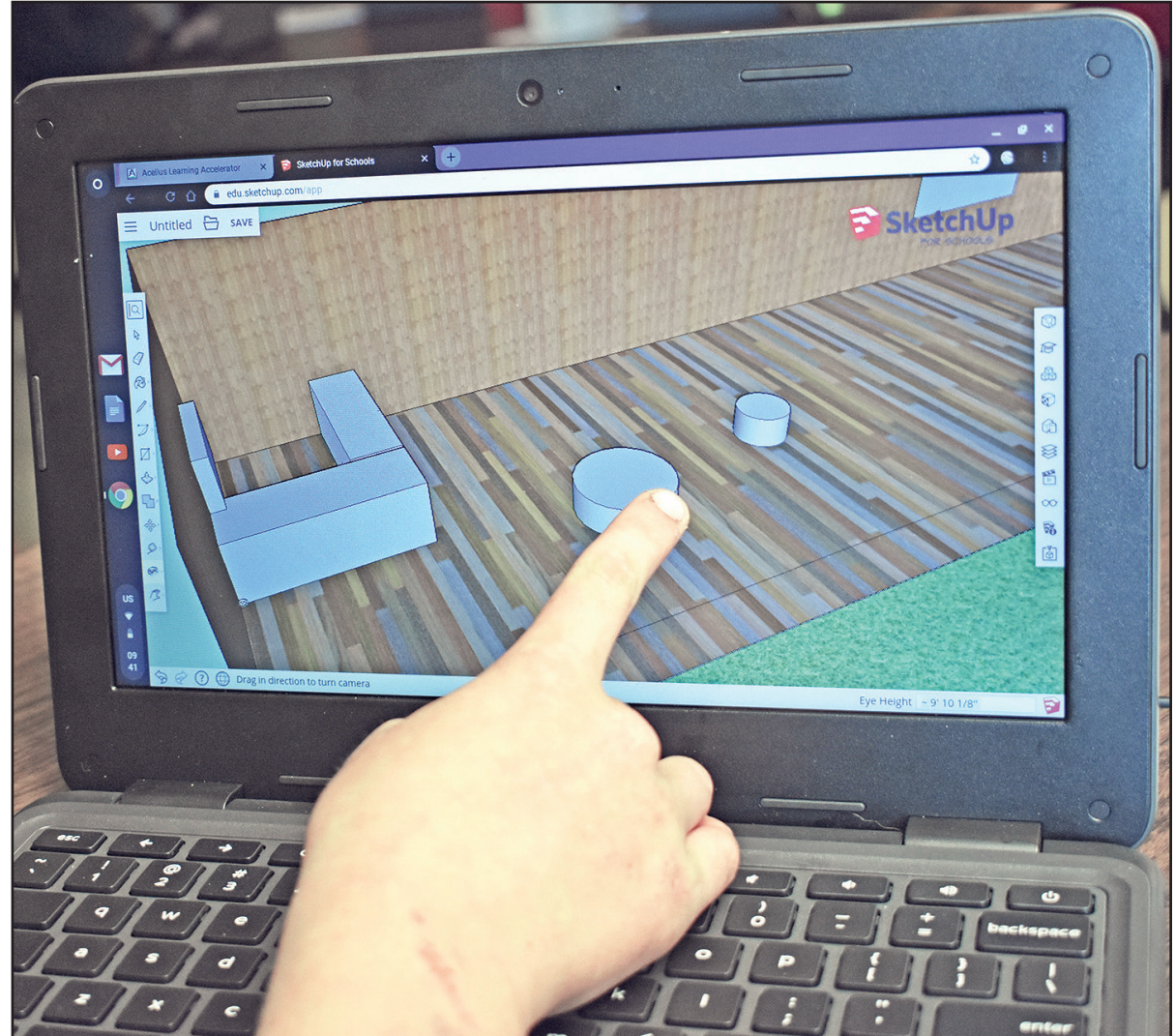
"We're creating a unit that earns as many credits as possible," Joseph said. "The expectations are the same — they have to meet the same requirements (as at Baker High School)."

The goal, however, isn't simply to finish the project.

"In true project-based learning, you have to value process as much, if not more than, the product," Joseph said.

This approach provides "freedom to fail" and the chance to look at the process and try again.

"You are rewarding risk — so you have to be prepared to fail,"



Students in the Eagle Cap program have a personalized education plan that builds core subjects around a topic of interest, such as using a design program called Sketch Up.

he said.

Right now the program has students from grades 9 to 12, plus one eighth-grader. Joseph said it could expand down to seventh-grade as well.

Students work in a multi-grade classroom and create a contract with Joseph and their family that determines their instructional minutes and progress for each day.

In addition to Joseph and

Evans, the staff at Eagle Cap includes Tracie Smith, program facilitator, paraprofessional Liz Smock (who is retired from a career with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers), and Mike Popa, who tutors in math every day from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Diplomas

Eagle Cap students can take courses at Baker High School,

and BHS students have access to classes at Eagle Cap.

If a student's schedule includes four courses at Eagle Cap, he or she earns a high school diploma from Eagle Cap Innovative High School.

If the majority of classes are completed at Baker High School, a student earns a diploma from BHS.