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CONTACT: Superintendent Nate Parker

APS and Adrian Steel Expand Jet Car Engineering Program

Students Accelerate into STEM with Hands on Learning and Competition

Adrian, MI – Building on the success of last year's launch, Adrian Public Schools and Adrian Steel have expanded their Jet Toy Engineering Program to include Prairie Elementary, bringing hands-on STEM learning to even more 5th-grade students across the district. This year, both Michener Elementary and Prairie Elementary participated in the 12-week program, which culminated in a jet car competition that celebrated student collaboration, creativity, and emerging engineering skills.

Part of SAE International's *A World in Motion* Jet Toy Competition, the program was led by Adrian Steel's Fleet Technical Project Manager Eric Liu, with support from a dedicated team of engineers: Ali Moreno, David Wright, Chief Engineer George Bernwanger, Jozie Scott, Erika Burke, Pat Lakatos, Paul Pangalos, Daisy Guzman-Pena, and Tina Dillaha. Throughout the experience, students explored core physics concepts, such as Newton's laws of motion, while designing, testing, and refining their own jet-powered vehicles.

Reflecting on the experience, Liu shared, "This year we took on two schools and took a longer time installing the program compared to last year. However, I felt like the time went by very quickly. My team and I had a wonderful experience."

Michener Elementary hosted its competition on May 9th, while Prairie Elementary celebrated its first-ever Jet Toy event on May 16th. At Michener, the winning team was Let Us Cook, while Amir the Crusher took home top honors at Prairie.

Prairie 5th grade teacher Ryan Neesam shared the excitement his students experienced throughout the program: "Every Friday, my students looked forward to meeting and working on their jet car. They saw that failure was part of learning, which led to their cars working better. Adrian Steel was knowledgeable and worked well with the kids!"

Meriah Kania, a teacher from Michener Elementary, shared, "Being involved now with this program for the second year, I can truly see the impact this program has on students and their enthusiasm for

engineering and design. Not everything works out perfectly the first time, and practicing the perseverance needed for success is an important life skill. It is a great opportunity for students to also collaborate in a meaningful way. The students loved being part of this each week.”

Callie Yatzek, Dean of Students at Prairie Elementary, reflected on the broader impact of this new opportunity: “Bringing this program to Prairie Elementary has been an amazing experience. Our students not only learned important STEM concepts but also gained confidence through hands-on problem-solving and teamwork. Watching their excitement build as their cars raced down the track was truly special. We’re so grateful for this partnership with Adrian Steel.”

The collaborative effort between Adrian Steel and Adrian Public Schools continues to emphasize real-world learning and community engagement. Teachers at both schools noted how the program sparked student interest in STEM careers and helped students make meaningful connections between classroom learning and real-world applications.

Superintendent Nate Parker praised the expansion of the program and its alignment with the district’s goals: “We are committed to providing our students with innovative, engaging learning experiences. The partnership with Adrian Steel exemplifies how we can bring real-world STEM opportunities into our schools. Seeing this program expand to Prairie Elementary this year is a testament to its success and impact. We deeply appreciate the dedication and support of Eric Liu and the Adrian Steel team.”

To learn more about Adrian Public Schools, please visit <https://www.adrianmaples.org/> or on [Facebook](#).



Michener's First Place Team: Team Let Us Cook, Thomas Rodehaver, Emma Cherry, Lewis Mota, Mya Winters, Anna Monroe, and Kristopher Gallant (not pictured)



Prairie's First Place Team: Aria Archer, Emma Gallagher, Meeko Torres



Adrian Steel Engineer Ali Moreno, along with Michener Elementary students, eagerly wait for the Jet Car to come to a stop for measurement.



Adrian Steel Engineers David Wright and Pat Lakatos, along with students Justyce Adams, Zavien Vasquez, and Zendayah Dillard, watch one of the Jet Car trial runs.