

PLANETARIUM NEWS

Summer STEAM Camps Keep Young Minds Exploring

Wadesboro Rotary Science Center and Henry H. "Punky" Morton Planetarium offers hands-on learning for Anson County students

School may have been out for the summer, but learning certainly wasn't at the Wadesboro Rotary Science Center and Henry H. "Punky" Morton Planetarium, where Anson County Schools students spent part of their vacation building, experimenting, exploring and discovering.

Anson County Schools offered a series of summer STEAM camps designed to provide engaging, hands-on learning opportunities for students at every elementary grade level. STEAM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics. The educational approach grew from the more familiar STEM concept, with the "A" for Arts emphasizing the role of creativity, design, communication and innovative thinking alongside science and technical subjects.

Rather than treating those subjects as completely separate areas of study, STEAM encourages students to draw upon several of them as they investigate questions, design projects, solve problems and create something of their own.

The camps also showcased one of the more distinctive educational resources available to Anson County students. While its planetarium may be the most immediately recognizable feature, the Wadesboro Rotary Science Center and Henry H. "Punky" Morton Planetarium provides opportunities for learning that extend well beyond astronomy and the night sky.

The science center allows students to encounter scientific concepts through experiences that complement what they learn in their regular classrooms. During this summer's camps, those experiences ranged from designing and building projects to investigating ecosystems, ocean life, science and the natural world.

Building, Designing and Problem-Solving

Maker Space Camp gave young participants an opportunity to become designers and problem-solvers. Instead of simply being told how something works, students could build, create, test ideas and learn from the results.

That kind of hands-on experience is an important part of STEAM learning. A project that doesn't work exactly as planned isn't necessarily a failure - it presents another problem to solve. Students can determine what went wrong, change their design and try again, developing persistence and critical-thinking skills in the process.

Exploring the Living World

Other campers turned their attention toward nature, exploring ecosystems and learning more about the relationships among living things and their environments.

Students also investigated ocean life, providing Anson County children with an opportunity to explore a world far removed from their everyday surroundings. Activities centered on science and nature encouraged campers to ask questions, make observations and discover more about the world around them.

Although each camp offered different activities, they shared a common approach: students were actively involved in learning. They worked together, explored ideas and used creativity and critical thinking rather than simply listening to a lesson.

More Than a Planetarium

The summer programs also demonstrate why the Wadesboro Rotary Science Center and Henry H. "Punky" Morton Planetarium is more than its name might initially suggest.

A planetarium naturally provides opportunities to introduce students to astronomy, space and the larger universe, but the science center expands that educational mission into other areas of scientific discovery and hands-on exploration. That makes the facility a resource for students with interests ranging from stars and planets to animals, ecosystems, engineering, technology and the natural world. Having such a facility available within the Anson County school system gives local students opportunities to experience science in ways that aren't always possible in a traditional classroom. A lesson encountered through an experiment, a project or an immersive experience can turn an abstract idea into something a child can see, touch, investigate and remember.

Just as importantly, those experiences can spark curiosity. A child who becomes fascinated by an animal, an engineering challenge, the ocean or the night sky during an elementary school program may be taking an early step toward an interest that continues through middle school, high school and even into a future career.

Throughout the summer, the camps provided plenty of opportunities for learning, but also for creativity, teamwork and fun. Students were able to spend time with their peers, tackle new challenges and make summer memories while continuing to exercise the skills they developed during the school year.

Anson County Schools expressed its appreciation to the staff members who made the summer STEAM camps possible and provided students with enriching educational experiences throughout their break. For the young campers, summer at the Wadesboro Rotary Science Center and Henry H. "Punky" Morton Planetarium proved that learning doesn't have to end when the final school bell rings - and science certainly isn't limited to what can be found in a textbook.



GET STARTED WITH PARENT PORTAL STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

Connecting to the Parent Portal is easy and essential. Whether you're requesting transportation, completing your annual update, or tracking academic progress, the Portal puts the information you need right at your fingertips.

- 1 Check your email with a subject **"Campus Parent Activation Key"** for a unique activation code, or contact your child's school if you need assistance.
- 2 Go to: **040.ncsis.gov/campus/portal/parents/psu040anson.jsp** or download the Campus Parent app to get started.
- 3 From the Student Home screen, find the Online Registration button located under Shortcuts.
(if you're using a mobile device, you may need to scroll down to find it.)
- 4 Look for **Existing Student Registration** and click Start.
- 5 On the next screen, you'll see the student(s) associated with your household. Please verify that all of your children are listed. Click **Begin Registration** to get started.
(You will also have the opportunity to add any new students during the application.)

Get started with Campus Parent (Parent portal)

- Check your email with a subject of "User Account Activation" that will contain a unique activation code.
- Go to 040.ncsis.gov/campus/portal/parents/psu040anson.jsp or download the Campus Parent app to get started.
- Click on the New User at the bottom of the login area.
- The activation key is provided in the email you received.
- Create your username and password.
- The next screen should ask you to enter your email address 2 times and the password you selected.
- You will have to check your email to verify the email address.

ANSON COUNTY SCHOOLS

BACK TO SCHOOL

Open House

THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, 2026

MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL

9:00-11:00 A.M.

AND

4:00-6:00 P.M.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

2:00-6:00 P.M.