

## Regional school agencies provide resources

April 11, 2016

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HANCOCK - Programs like Family Science Night and the Western U.P. Science Fair and STEM Festival are just two examples of local school programs available to K-12 students, teachers and parents. But funding for the programs must come from somewhere, and that is where the Western Upper Peninsula Center for Science, Mathematics and Environmental Education comes in.

The Western U.P. Center, along with the Michigan Tech Center for Science & Environmental Outreach, partner to seek grants to fund the programs.

"Some funding agencies prefer a school district. If you have U.S. Department of Education funds that you're applying for, they prefer school districts, such as the ISD (Copper Country Intermediate School District)," said Shawn Oppliger, director of the Western U.P. Center.

On the other hand, there are agencies that will provide funding to universities, rather than individual school districts.

"So that gives us a lot of flexibility," Oppliger said. "A school district cannot receive National Science Foundation money. But we partner with people at Michigan Tech who can receive that money. And then that allows us to get some funding for programs that go to the students."

This where the Western U.P. Center and Center for Science & Environmental Outreach come together.

"At the CCISD office, there is me; I'm the director," Opplinger said. "Loret (Roberts) is our secretary, but she wears other hats also. We are under the General Education Department here. Then over at the Michigan Tech office (Center for Science & Environmental Outreach), Joan (Chadde) is in charge of that office. Lloyd Wescoat and Marcy (Erickson) work with her."

The Western Upper Peninsula Center for Science, Mathematics and Environmental Education and the MTU Center for Science & Environmental Outreach partner together for grant writing and programming for the 19 school districts.

"Joan (Chadde) and I work together to put all of these programs together and implement the programs," Oppliger said.