

The Duncan Banner

Students get a leg up on college

By Grant D. Crawford
CNHI Oklahoma

TAHLEQUAH — Like the early bird that catches the worm, the student who works ahead catches the degree.

The Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics is helping students across the state get a leg up on their studies, offering college-level courses to high schoolers. The OSSM has regional centers established in career-tech schools across Oklahoma, including the Indian Capital Technology Center in Tahlequah.

Longtime OSSM instructor Gil Brown said he's taught students who have moved on to some of the top universities in the country.

"We have students go to just about every Ivy League school and military academy," said Brown. "We've had students who graduated from here and went



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Steve Crawley, left, and Amanda Butler work on an assignment at the Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics regional center at the Indian Capital Technology Center in Tahlequah.

to [Northeastern State University] when they were seniors. They had enough college hours to have a minor in mathematics when they graduated high school, so they're getting a jump-start on their college education."

Some of the schools OSSM students have gone on to attend include MIT, Harvard, Yale, Notre Dame,

BYU, Duke, Princeton and many more. Last year, three OSSM students enrolled in Calculus III at NSU as seniors in high school.

Brown and OSSM instructor Amanda Butler said the class sizes — for either calculus or physics — are small enough for teachers to work one-on-one with students. They're also capable of going a little more in-depth in some

topics than instructors at many other schools.

"Most of our schools don't offer these classes," said Butler. "I don't think anybody offers the AP Physics C: Mechanics. Some people have physics, but they don't have the AP, and this is the calculus-based physics. So that puts us in a unique place, because we offer classes that they can't get at their

home high schools."

Not only will students who enroll at OSSM have a head start on college credentials, they'll also be prepared for the increased workload when they reach that level. Butler said oftentimes, college freshmen have it rough, because they weren't prepared for the workload.

"Most of our kids don't have that issue as freshmen," said Butler. "They know how to study when they get there, and that's one of the biggest advantages I think we give them."

Even homeschool students can find ways to get ahead by enrolling at OSSM.

Dan Crawley, OSSM student, said he was planning to take his own curricula at home until he heard about the OSSM courses.

"Basically, it cut down three years' worth of homework I would have done myself, into one year,"

said Crawley. "So that was very convenient."

Crawley said he's always enjoyed mathematics and plans to pursue some type of engineering degree. He said it helps to have teachers who are with him at every step of the journey.

"The teachers here have been really great," he said. "They've helped us with our homework throughout the whole thing. They've just been amazing teachers, and that really helps with fields like mathematics and science, because they're difficult to do by yourself."

Students have the opportunity to go on field trips to The University of Arkansas, where they can tour the engineering department and get an inside look at the different facets of engineering. Also, those who pass their AP exams are reimbursed for the exam fee.