

nonprofit spotlight

Information Technology Empowerment Center

Math wasn't Destiny's favorite subject, as she puts it. She's a fifth-grade student at Lewton Elementary School in Lansing who likes to jump rope, play basketball and go to her iMath classes at the Information Technology Empowerment Center in Lansing.

ITEC gives disadvantaged and at-risk youth 21st century skills and tools to succeed in life.

"When I first started it was hard, but when I started working on it a lot and paying attention, it started getting easier," she said. "When I come here, it helps me understand more. It breaks it down by steps and I can go at my own pace."

Destiny wants to be a doctor and a singer when she grows up, but before iMath, she struggled in math classes and was performing below grade level. Now, when asked how doing math makes her feel, she says, "It makes me feel proud and happy."

About ITEC

- Information Technology Empowerment Center (ITEC)
- 200 N. Foster Ave., Lansing, MI 48912
- (517) 708-4390
- www.iteclansing.com
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- **Purpose of the organization:** Mixing equal parts science and fun, the Information Technology

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ITEC

Add it up: A student works on his math skills in ITEC's iMath class, currently offered at three Lansing schools.

Empowerment Center teaches technology to build opportunity for youth and families in Michigan.

- **How the community**

benefits: ITEC's variety of programs and partnerships provide opportunities for youth and families to participate in the global knowledge economy by increasing their science, technology, engineering and mathematics skills. As the demand for STEM-related knowledge and skills continues to grow, ITEC addresses this demand head-on with creativity, passion and expertise.

- **Some big news:** ITEC just launched 2020 Girls, an innovative collaboration between ITEC and the Michigan Council of Women in Technology. It provides an opportunity for young

women in mid-Michigan to learn about programming, engineering and design in courses led by female instructors. The program aims to send young women on a trajectory towards success in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education and careers in 2020 and beyond.

- **Making a difference:** ITEC classes have a strong influence on student attitudes toward STEM subjects. A sample of surveys administered to approximately 750 ITEC students showed a 21 percent increase in students who describe themselves as "really interested" in computer classes, and a gain of 25 percent in students who are "really interested" in science after taking an ITEC class.
- **What you might not know:** Kids love ITEC! The iMath

program at Lewton Elementary had more than 80 applicants for the 30 available slots. According to Lewton paraprofessional Justine McCauley, "Each and every day, I have students coming to me and asking when they can join the iMath Program. They are seeing that their friends are improving and they want to also."

- **How can you help?**

Sponsor an ITEC student's summer camp tuition or a Lego robotics kit. Volunteer to help iMath students keep pace with their peers or to inspire a Lego class to create the robot of their dreams.

The nonprofit spotlight runs each Sunday in the Life section. Want to be featured? Visit lsj.com/nonprofit to fill out the form.