



# ANTHONY WAYNE SCHOOLS

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## 7th Grade Students Save Astronaut

Mr. Borchardt's 7th grade Science students had the opportunity to save the astronauts of the Apollo 13 space mission in a distance-learning project partnering with the Lucas County Educational Service Center's Challenger Learning Center. Using his smartboard, video projector, and distance learning camera, Mr. Borchardt brought Mr. Reed Steele, the coordinator/flight director for the LCESC Challenger Learning Center, into his classroom to help facilitate the activity. After watching a short clip of the movie *Apollo 13*, the students were given the task of saving the astronauts by fixing the air filtration system that was damaged by an explosion during flight.

The students were split into "Tiger Teams" of six individuals and given specific roles to play. Roles included: principle investigator, research analyst, materials specialist, communications officer, time controller, and engineering specialist. Each student had to fulfill his or her role in the group while participating in the simulation. The students were only given specific materials to repair the air filtration system, so that it would properly filter the carbon dioxide from the cabin. They had twenty minutes to come up with a solution to fix the air filtration system and save the astronauts. Both Mr. Borchardt and Mr. Steel were available for questions and to help guide the students through the exercise.

As the time passed, the students worked feverishly to accomplish their task. When their time was up, each group reported their solution back to the class, Mr. Borchardt, and Mr. Steel. The class then voted as to which configuration seemed to be the best solution to save the astronauts. Mr. Borchardt chose to do this activity in his class for many reasons. "First, our students today are the problem solvers of tomorrow. Our future will depend on how well the students we teach can understand, problem-solve, and find the correct solution to problems they encounter. Problem solving is not just specific to science but to any endeavor," said Mr. Borchardt. "I also chose this activity because it involves a unique technology that these students have never used before. When they came in contact with Mr. Steele via the distance connection and they were given their problem to solve, it was unbelievable to watch how they interacted and focused their attention."

Mr. Borchardt would also like to thank Commander Steele and the Challenger Learning Center for their help with this activity. "I have always been a fan of the Challenger Learning Center and what Reed Steele is doing there. I believe they highlight what is best about science education; real world, problem-solving, science inquiry that engages students," said Mr. Borchardt. If you would like more information about the LCESC Challenger Learning Center, visit:

<http://www.lucas.k12.oh.us/index.php?section=107>

[http://AnthonyWayneSchools.org/Junior\\_High\\_School/index.html](http://AnthonyWayneSchools.org/Junior_High_School/index.html) - Junior High Website





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