

## New State-of-the-Art Lower School Science Lab Promotes Inquiry-Based Science Activities



Adam Carswell, Lower School Director, wanted students to have a space where they could learn about science by *doing* science. The new Lower School science lab fits that vision perfectly as it gives students opportunities to actively engage in learning science.

Carswell explains, “Grade-level science teachers collaborate with the science lab teacher to co-plan lab experiences for students.” Carswell went on to add that the science lab encourages students to build on their natural curiosity about the world in which they live by giving them opportunities to apply the scientific method to inquire, observe, test, and understand. The goal is to pique students’ interest in science so they want to learn and discover more.



The Lower School science lab is unique in that it contains state of the art equipment such as the Maxflo Arm Exhaust (this apparatus ensures that the air in the lab is clean by sucking out odors during experiments). This and other innovative equipment are rarely found in an elementary school science lab. In fact, some university and college labs do not include such modern safety equipment.

Fanya De Maria, Science Lab Teacher, said that the science lab fosters collaboration as students hypothesize, research, experiment, and report on their findings together. To document their conclusions, each student has a notebook for data

collection and observations. Students have recently studied polymers and monomers, physical and chemical erosion of rocks, convection currents, the hydrological cycle, and even examined sheep brains and cow eyeballs as they learned about the nervous system. Jonathan, a fifth grade student, summed it up this way, “Science is a lot of fun because the experiments that we do in the lab are interactive and give us an opportunity to practice what we learn in class.”