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If I had six Lorell Narrow Steel Shelving units from Friends Office to allow multiple students throughout multiple class periods access to the tools and supplies needed to design and build, as well as offer them their own classroom storage space, I could more easily implement the STEM classes for Robotics & Automation and Flight & Space that are currently being developed at Van Buren Middle School.

I have been involved with the Genius Hour Program at Van Buren Middle School for five years. This is a period designed for students to explore their own interests beyond the normal classroom curriculum. This has allowed students to do service learning projects, partner with local businesses, record school history, and improve our school aesthetic.

The Genius Hour Program was expanded and included in the Middle School Advisory Period so that all students were involved in these projects, not just those who made them fit into their schedule as an elective. For the last three years, as part of Advisory, we have been working with students to understand the design process and challenge them to think creatively and critically to solve real world problems.

Project Lead the Way is the next logical step for us, as a school, to help our students go beyond the classroom. This program is designed by a non-profit organization to help schools further implement the exact goals we were working towards with our school wide Advisory program. I have been tasked with implementing these courses at Van Buren. The two courses we are beginning with are "Automation and Robotics" and "Flight andSpace." Both of these courses are very "hands on," with students building robots and models. Because of this, we must have storage space for our tools and materials as well as space for student projects. These shelving units will give each student a place for storage right at their workspace. This allows for quicker transitions within, and between, classes and therefore more time to work, build, and explore these concepts in our allotted time.

My classroom is in the basement of the 103 year old portion of the building. While we have celebrated the achievement of the Centennial, the age of the building does create some barriers to overcome. In a modern technology based class like Automation & Robotics in particular, space is at a premium. No one in 1917 prepared for, or even thought of the possibility that, future Van Buren students would be building robots and programming them to perform tasks in that basement classroom between the original locker rooms. It was intended as a classroom for every first grade student in the district. Now, we are planning for seventh and eighth graders to learn computer coding and build robots there. Now, we need to find space in the room to test them.

These shelving units will create vertical storage for robots and materials that will make floor space available so that our students will be able to smoothly transition into and out of class, between tasks, and find the space to test their creations.

As a twenty plus year veteran teacher, I am excited to offer Van Buren students this new opportunity. Now, to make it work within the confines of our 103yearold building.