

# Poof! Hogwarts lands at Logan school

By Jennifer Toomer-Cook

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LOGAN — A sorting hat, care of magical creatures, herbology — Logan's Hillcrest Elementary this summer is no place for Muggles.

Harry Potter's Hogwarts Academy has descended on the school, drawing young wizards from Utah and Wyoming to its astronomy, herbology and care of magical creatures courses. It also includes Quidditch and dueling spells games, in which young competitors learn concepts of probability, and the winner gets a pack of Bertie Bott's Beans, ranging in flavors from fruits to earwax, grass to vomit.

It's an extensive, true-to-the-book curriculum, created five years ago by Hillcrest third-grade teacher Reed Olson after watching his students bury their noses in J.K. Rowling's series about the bespectacled boy wizard.

"What a great teaching tool," Olson said. "How many other books do you know of where kids carry it around like it's a little baby?"

Harry Potter's popularity has made it into educational offerings across the state. Granite District had a course created around the boy



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Emmy Visick, 9, of Logan uses her wand to "duel" with Amy Bradfield, 11, of Star Valley, Wyo., during a Hogwarts Academy summer program at Hillcrest Elementary in Logan. Watching the duel is teacher Reed Olson.

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## ACADEMY

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wizard a few years back. Murray's Liberty Elementary last month welcomed 45 wizards to a weeklong Hogwarts School for First and Second Year Students, aimed at creatively capturing the state core curriculum through "potions" (science), "defense against the dark arts" (social skill building), herbology, Muggle studies (art) and Quidditch (sans flying broomsticks).

The Hogwarts Academy in the Logan school is an extensive follow to Olson's use of Rowling's books to teach reading. He says the novels naturally lure kids, and reading them aloud helps kids with fluency. Mysterious plots allow for "think alouds," where he and students can discuss characters and how they relate to each other and predict what might happen next, all of which help sharpen comprehension skills.

Olson's five-week summer class goes a lot farther.

Forty third- through eighth-graders come for two four-hour daily shifts. They wear wizard robes, carry wands and have been placed into "houses" — Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Slytherin and Ravenclaw — all by a Sorting Hat and online personality quiz. House points add up to seize the House Cup, just as they do in the book.



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Harry Potter patches and other collectibles are on display at the Hogwarts Academy where young wizards sharpen their academic skills.

In "Care of Magical Creatures" classes, one animal was brought to class each day. They included lizards, frogs, a turtle and a rooster. On the last day, a zoo official brought an owl. That day, the children learned real-life owls are not messenger birds, but homing pigeons are. They even outfitted pigeons with personal notes that the birds flew back to the zoo. A staff member e-mailed the messages' contents to prove they had safely arrived.

Students also finished up a week's worth of astronomy lessons, which included photos from the Hubble telescope and Greek and Roman mythology lessons.

They'll also be playing the wizards' ballgame, Quidditch — though they stayed on the ground. (In the book, players

are aboard broomsticks and are airborne.) The Logan version, much like soccer, sets them seeking the elusive snitch (a gold marble) hidden somewhere in the grass, Olson said.

Snitches also are hidden daily in the library, where children look for them as they would in an Easter-egg hunt. Each snitch contains a clue to the location of the "Department of Mysteries" and its contents, which the students will discover at the end of the course.

Meanwhile, students will study herbology (where they'll learn all about plants) and potions (essentially a chemistry

class, including fun experiments and crazy concoctions).

And, of course, they're reading Book 5, "Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix." They'll finish the tome right before the July 16 release of "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince," which they'll read the last week.

Students can hardly wait.

"I'm a huge fan of Harry Potter, and I love reading," said fourth-grader Maranda Haderlie, who has read all five books "20 times. And Mr. Olson's a pretty good teacher."

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