

SIXTH GRADE NEWS

April 07, 2017

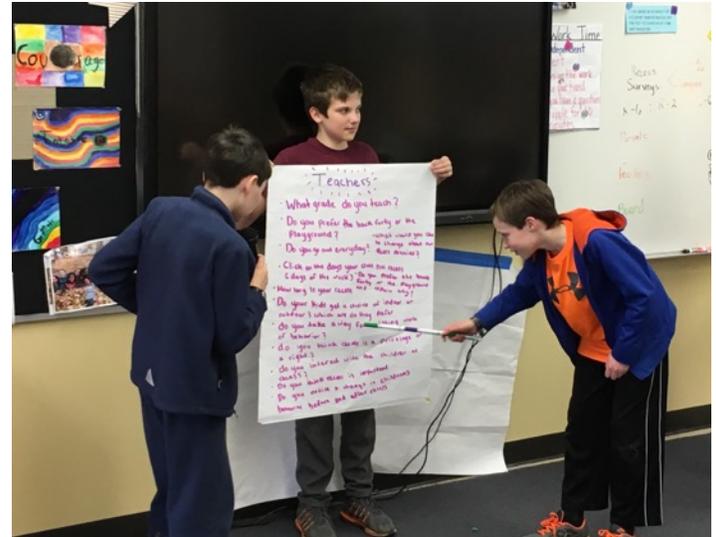
It's Been a Busy Two Weeks!

Is it really Spring Break next week? A good thing since our sixth graders have been working hard non-stop since returning from our Four Cities trip. Last week we met with Nate Hayes at Cumming Nature Center to share what we learned from the experts about nature play during our Four Cities trip and he shared with us the space we will be working with (and that 6th grade will need to make a presentation to the funders of the project!). It was a rough day - a cold rain made measuring the space and taking notes difficult and we appreciate the perseverance many students showed.

The other big project sixth graders are tackling in this final expedition is a review of our existing recess policy. We will make recommendations for a revised policy that reflects what we've learned about play over the course of the year as well as the research we've done on what the experts say recess should look like. We've even interviewed stakeholders and surveyed students and parents about their thoughts. Next week we will look at the survey data and begin piecing together our research into a unified policy that we will present to the GCCS Board of Trustees. Our hope is that the new policy will be adopted and be added to the Family Handbook.

In other playful news, we continue to work with PlayROCs on play advocacy. We conducted research on school recess policies, only to discover that many schools lack a formal policy or do not make it easy to find! Some schools' recess ranges from 20-30 minutes, others let kids play outside only if it is above 30 degrees - some if it is above 50! The RCSD policy is the only one that prohibits recess being taken away as a punishment, but many parents have said that still happens. We might need to look into this!

We also made our presence known at City Hall, where sixth graders presented reasons why funding and replacing playground equipment was necessary. What we didn't know was that council was voting on a funding package for playground infrastructure - we'd like to think our testimony helped the unanimous vote for funding Rochester playgrounds!



Portfolio Essays and Feedback

We are working through the written portfolio pieces with about half of them still complete in the next two months. Next on deck is *Myself as a Mathematician*, followed by *Myself as an Artist*. Like much of the writing we've been doing in sixth grade, these pieces require students to cite evidence of their work in their reflections. This is the theme of feedback teachers have shared with students: "How will your reader know this? Consider sharing a few sentences from your work to highlight this trait." "Contrast this 3rd grade piece with a 6th grade poem to show the growth in your use of voice and word choice." Of course, this requires students to use work samples to write effectively to the prompt. Student portfolios are a treasure-trove of archived work and sixth-graders have been mining this resource to help them. Evidence will also be necessary for the math and art reflections as well. Not sure what the prompts are requiring? Check out the "Portfolio Central" section of our class webpage to download the task sheets.



6th Grade Rocks Community Circle



The class did an amazing job showcasing various styles of urban dance and had the audience on their feet. Special thanks to Mrs. Johnson for her creative approach to movement and to our teachers and parents who represented the Old School ways!



Don't forget!

- ✓ **Electronics Reminder** - Personal electronics may be used on school busses (per driver permission) but are not to be taken out or used at school.
- ✓ **Sustainable Sixth Graders** - We will be "hosting" Community Circle on April 26th to highlight what classrooms around the school are doing to promote sustainability at GCCS. Sixth graders will also be welcoming visitors from World of Inquiry School #58 that day to share the "hows and whys" of school composting.
- ✓ **Spring Break is Coming** - This is a great opportunity to think about community service hours. We will post upcoming events on our class webpage, but it is up to each sixth grader to fulfill his/ her hours and document them.

Your Sixth Grade Team

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