

## FIFTH GRADE UNIVERSAL THEME: IMPACT

### September Class News:

What a wonderful first class we had in 5th grade G/T! We kicked off our universal theme of IMPACT by discussing **the impact of early philosophers** and the question “Am I a philosopher?” Readings from the book *Plato Was Wrong*, convinced us that we are, indeed, all philosophers! The first philosophers recorded in history were some of the greatest mathematicians and scientists, too, such as Thales, who measured a giant pyramid with only a stick! In his honor, we ventured out to our flagpole and tried to figure out a way to measure its height with just meter sticks. The students came up with some great ideas! This fabulous group was also not intimidated by the very challenging **Math Mind Bender** I gave them! Most had time to try out some perplexor logic puzzles and we ended the day with **a virus simulation**, after reading about Dr. Snow and the cholera epidemic in London (1854). I’m looking forward to a great year!

### October Class News:



A GAME CALLED “GET TO ZERO”  
INVOLVES ADDING POSITIVE AND  
NEGATIVE INTEGERS.

The 5th grade G/T students have been busy this past month! In math, **a game called “Get to Zero”** reinforced the addition of positive and negative integers, which will help us as we begin Level 3 of **Hands-On Equations**, our pre-algebra curriculum. The students also were introduced to the great philosopher and mathematical genius, Pythagoras, and participated in **a math lesson designed to elicit the Pythagorean Theorem** using just colored squares. There are always a few students able to figure it out without knowing the formula—amazing! And, even if they don’t see it at first, the visual they create helps them remember the formula later. We’ll work on applying Pythagoras’ Theorem in a future lesson. In other activities, the students have been exploring genetics and

inherited traits, completing **a simulation of the passing of dominant and recessive genes to the third generation**, which will relate to our novel study of *The Giver*. We also put time into perspective, **creating a timeline** and learning why the 1900's are called the 20th century. Finally, we have embarked on a TOP SECRET project that cannot be named here, but you can ask your child what we are up to. It's very exciting! I am also thrilled that a number of 5th grade students have already met personal and academic goals they set last month and we'll begin posting the results of their work on our blog. Students will take home notebooks after the winter break so they can share what they are learning in G/T class.



5TH GRADERS LEARN ABOUT  
DOMINANT AND RECESSIVE GENES  
AS THEY PARTICIPATE IN A  
SIMULATION OF WHAT GREGOR  
MENDEL DID WITH PEA PLANTS.

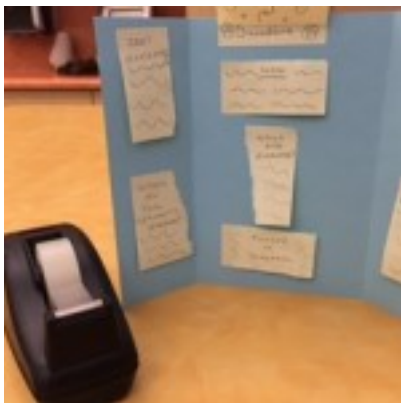
### **November / December Class News:**

It's uncanny how quickly November and December flew by, with all of the special events and holidays! The most important thing to report is that we are ready to reveal the TOP SECRET project we've been working on! The 5th graders are helping to **create a hands-on mini-museum** to be housed here at school! We have spent a great deal of time hammering out the details, using CoRT Thinking strategies and online brainstorming tools and surveys! I'm not sure who is more excited about this project- the students or me- but we are hard at work with the goal of seeing our vision become reality! I began **a teacher blog about our process**, and will share that at some point before the "big reveal" of our museum. One portion of the museum will be devoted to student exhibits, based on their independent studies. The students are **investigating answers to a variety of thought-provoking questions** such as "What Happens When You Dream?" "How Are Codes Used in Times of War?" and "What is the Future of Technology in Our Lives?" These questions require a lot of digging to find reliable and accurate resources; we are learning a great deal about finding and citing educational resources.

In addition to this great undertaking, we continue to explore advanced math concepts and do lessons in Level III of Hands-On Equations. The students have enjoyed various kinds of critical and logical thinking activities, and we've been working on advanced vocabulary and continued reinforcement of **Greek and Latin roots**. Before the winter break, we had an amazing dialogue following the **reading of the famous short story "Gift of the Magi"** by O. Henry. Parents, report cards will be sent home on January 8th and notebooks will follow within a week or two. I'm looking forward to a super spring semester!

### January/ February Class News:

This year, it's been a challenge to keep up with our class blog. We are busy, busy, busy, but not posting much, so I will try to do better over these next few months. I hope you enjoyed looking through your child's G/T notebook! I am so pleased with the progress the students have made thus far.



Students are planning their museum displays by creating mini-displays on cardstock first.

Most exciting to me is how much the fifth graders have impressed me with their decision-making for our mini-museum. We are planning to invite students and G/T 5th grade parents to visit it in May. I've been sharing about the creation and development of this project via **this blog**. The students are proud and excited that this will be their legacy for others to enjoy, and it is always fun to have a real audience for our work. At this point, we are referring to our end-of-the-year "museum" as the L.E.A.D. Exhibit. L.E.A.D. is an acronym for "learn, explore and discover" which is what we hope visitors will do when they come to our museum. It will be housed in three classrooms in the portable building and we plan to invite the fourth grade classes to come in the last weeks of school. Also, we have placed a project on the website "**Donors Choose**" and hope that we can get the donations we need for the Osmo iPad games.

In addition to our museum project, we have been learning about the structure of DNA and made models with pasta and pipe cleaners. Genetic engineering is a topic that comes up in our novel *The Giver*, and we've been learning a lot about it. In Math, we've done some cool "team logic" problems, a challenging activity called "Find the Equation" as part of our Hands-On Equations curriculum, advanced problem solving and math mind benders. You may have heard about **the ASU Tribe lesson**; if not, please ask your child to share about it! In addition to our novel studies, we read many different kinds of text and sometimes follow with Socratic dialogue. We also found time to write some "**academic valentines**," which was more challenging than it seemed at first!

I'm looking forward to sharing more soon! It's hard to believe we are so close to spring break!

### March Class News:

During the last few weeks, we've learned a lot while having fun! We finished our novel, *The Giver*, and the students truly impressed me with their discussion of symbolism in the story. Connecting this dystopian novel to science, and continuing with our genetic engineering curriculum, we learned more about DNA and did **an experiment to extract the DNA from strawberries**! It was amazing!



Seeing strands of DNA with the naked eye! We extracted the DNA of strawberries.

In Math, we learned about some "curiosities" such as twin primes and cousin primes. We also held a rousing class competition in which teams raced to solve a variety of math puzzles and problems. The NERDS and the EXPLODING UNICORN POTATOES tied for first place in the contest, but TEAM PI, the FIRE-BREATHING DUCKIES, the CHOCOLATE SKITTLES, and THE DOMINATORS were not far behind.

On Thursday, we have a special guest speaker, **Mrs. Carole Nelms**. Mrs. Nelms was in Mission Control at Johnson Space Center the day that Apollo 13 landed and is going to share about that amazing experience. I told her that we had studied all about Apollo 13 and that the class would love to hear from someone who was actually there. We look forward to that!

We also look forward to April 28th, when we will travel to middle school for a 5th Grade G/T Think-a-Thon. This event is a bit like a field day with an academic twist. Permission slips will be going home on April 14th. On April 15th, at 1:00 p.m. I will be holding a meeting for parents who'd like to volunteer that morning (approximately 9:00 – 12:15).

Finally, in May, we will host the opening of our L.E.A.D. Exhibit! We have been exploring the new materials that have arrived for the "Tech Town" room. The students love the **OSMO** iPad games, especially the game of Newton, and it was fun figuring out what we could build with **Cubelets**! There are so many exciting things happening in 5th grade G/T!



The students love the Newton game that's included with our new OSMO iPad sets!

### **April / May Class News:**

Wow! What a fun end to our year as we opened **our LEAD DoSeum** to all nine fourth grade classes as well as some 5th grade and adult guests! The students were challenged as docents, to be helpful, polite and smiling for each new group that came through the museum! If you were able to visit, hopefully you saw the board detailing all of the thinking strategies we used in the planning, and the depth and complexity that went into the research. The most challenging thing, I believe, for the students was whittling down their research to just the BIG IDEAS, since they knew that visitors would

not be able to spend a great deal of time reading a lot of information. We were excited to be featured on the district website! Although traveling students had scheduling conflicts during the last two weeks, we did have a super last class together, during which the students participated in an end-of-year online quiz on the website KAHOOT. They also wrote **letters to their future selves** which I will mail to them at the end of their 8th grade year. So parents, if you move in the next three years, please send me an email and let me know your new address! I have loved working with these special students and I wish you all the best as you head on to middle school! Come back and see me!

