



## **Gifted & Talented Faculty:**

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**Coordinator**

Jennifer Augusterfer  
Grades K-3 Lincoln School  
Grades K-3 Washington School  
**Enrichment/Discovery**

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Grades 4-6 Pierrepont School  
**Inquiry**

## **Washington and Lincoln Schools** **Jennifer Augusterfer**

### **Grade 1 & 2 Enrichment**

First and second graders have been extremely busy in Enrichment class. They have been studying the five brain exercises of listen, think, imagine, remember and observe. We try to utilize all of these exercises in each of our weekly class lessons. The first graders recently completed a unit on inventions. First graders had the opportunity to design and build a “spicycle,” which is a bicycle for an eight-legged spider. Using classroom supplies and imaginations, they were able to create some very unique models that were on display in our classroom. First graders also worked like detectives to solve a variety of puzzles. Students had to use deductive reasoning and logic

elimination to identify the mystery animals that were discussed in class.

Second graders completed a variety of inventions with varying degrees of difficulty. Our last, and most extensive, was an invention that needed to use an empty toilet paper roll. After saving hundreds of cardboard rolls, they went to work and were very creative with their blueprints and final product designs. Second graders spent a few class periods learning how to solve *Sudoku* puzzles. Once they started to perfect the puzzles using paper and pencil, they tried a few out using the Chromebooks. Each student was able to log in to their *Google* accounts, enter the *Google Classroom* and solve a variety of *Sudoku* puzzles that were posted for them.



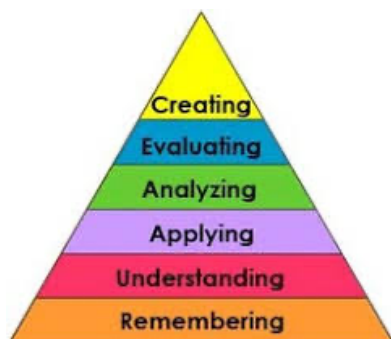
### **Grade 3 Discovery**

Discovery Classes at Lincoln and Washington Schools began the year with a unit on self reflection and self-discovery. The students reflected on their lives and talents. They began writing an autobiographical piece by creating a shield. The students enjoyed becoming

acquainted with each other through their conversations and during their presentations.

Discovery students had the opportunity to visit the Grounds for Sculpture in Hamilton, NJ. To prepare for our trip, the students investigated the backgrounds of the featured artists and their work. Once we returned, the students brainstormed ideas and created some very unique sculptures using a variety of classroom materials. Students completed a **Google Slides** Presentation explaining the inspiration for his or her own sculpture and how it evolved. Their presentations came alive as the children added some fun graphics and sound effects to accompany their work.

After receiving a Rutherford Education Foundation grant for LEGO kits, students utilized the kits for a challenging and rewarding task. Third graders in both schools downloaded the WeDo 2.0 app onto Chromebooks and followed the procedures for building and coding the model, Milo the Science Rover. Once this initial task was finished, the students synced their LEGO hubs to Bluetooth and then coded their models to move. Lastly, the students researched and reported on a given topic. Students worked independently building and coding another LEGO model to coordinate with their own topic of study. Additionally, all of the classes learned about speed, volcanic eruptions and why it's important to have a base on the moon through the LEGO activities. A few students went on to find out about the use of a prosthetic hand and made suggestions for making a new and better prosthetic for future use.



## Pierrepont School – Amanda Almaliah All Grades

How wonderful it was to finally feel like we were “back to normal.” I am relieved to have been able to return to teaching Gifted and Talented, my home and happy place at Pierrepont School.

Since we were all returning to a new normal, we took our time at the onset of the school year to get to know each other (and in some cases, see me as the Gifted teacher and not the Computer teacher). We talked a lot about setting goals, which is especially important for gifted students who may be motivated by grades. Students brainstormed, planned and created a SMART goal to become better at something important to them. We revisited these goals and saw who accomplished what they set out to do and who needed to rethink and revise their goals, which is equally as important.

All the while we were VERY busy with our weekly math competition, Math Madness by Arete Labs. Math Madness is an online, team-based competition event that takes place each fall and spring where our 4th and 5th graders competed in the Elementary School division and our 6th graders had the tall task of competing against 7th and 8th graders in the middle school division. They answered questions online, timed by the competition and sometimes playing against schools in real time. This bracket style competition enabled students to compete in weekly followed by a nation-wide, single elimination bracket tournament.

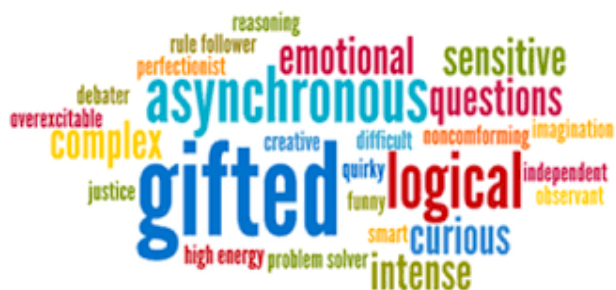


## 4<sup>th</sup> Grade – Inquiry

Once our self-exploration was complete, we examined our connection with the environment. As the environment becomes an ever-increasing matter of national and international importance, students’ knowledge of energy gains in value. We started out learning about energy, (renewable and non-renewable) and our carbon footprint. We created presentations to share their information and understanding.

Next came the weekly math competition, Math Madness by Arete Labs. The weekly competition was followed by a nation-wide, single elimination bracket tournament.

Following this project, students began reading *Who Really Killed Cock Robin?* by Jean Craighead George. Through reading the story, students continue to learn about human impact on the environment and think about ways we can make a difference. In this interdisciplinary unit, students learned about the chemicals we use in our daily lives and how pesticides and insecticides affect an entire food chain. They were each offered different project ideas before starting so they could research food webs, chemicals, and ecosystems. For their final project, students had an opportunity to pick what interests them from a choice board that offered more than 12 different final project choices for them to explore ranging from Endangered Animals to creating something new from used objects.



## 5<sup>th</sup> Grade – Inquiry

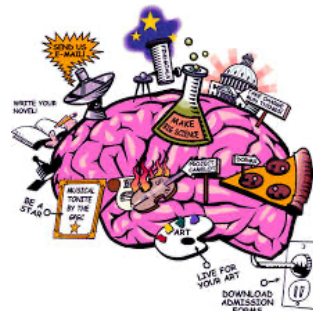
While the 4<sup>th</sup> grade was focused on fostering independent and creative thinking, 5<sup>th</sup> graders began to work cooperatively to solve problems

and learn how to brainstorm to generate ideas. Our theme this year, while heavily centered on space, is about travel and expedition.

We started the year off with exercises which focused on goal setting and positive character traits. We learned about the Race to Space and why the United States started NASA. We learned facts about the moon, the International Space Station, and the layout of the different space shuttles. Then we contemplated what we would need to bring if we were to ever travel to the moon. Students showed off their creativity by creating constellations. And they demonstrated their problem-solving skills by designing “space capsules” to safely return an astronaut to Earth.

Next, students started on the *Things that Fly* unit. They worked in small groups to create a glider and learn about aerodynamics and flight. While seemingly easy, this difficult challenge required them to construct a glider that actually glides using a shoebox as the “base” and any other easily accessible material they could attach. We tested them out and analyzed what we could do better had they had time to continue to redesign.

We switched gears and brought our sights down to Earth for our next project called *Road Trip*. This adventure was a problem-based learning group project where students worked in small teams (or by themselves, if they chose) to create a route that takes me and my family across the country to see sights they recommend with limited time and budget. To present their “trips” they created a presentation along with physical representations of the places they recommended like a sculpture, postcard and Yelp review. I am hoping to try and visit some of their recommendations soon!



## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade – Inquiry

Sixth graders found out first hand that, “there is nothing like first-hand evidence” as this year’s theme is *Becoming a Detective*. Things are never as easy as they seem this year, as we started off with tests of observation, critical thinking, and perseverance. They had their questioning and inquiry skills sharpened and practiced deductive reasoning all through classroom activities that seemed more like games than hard work.

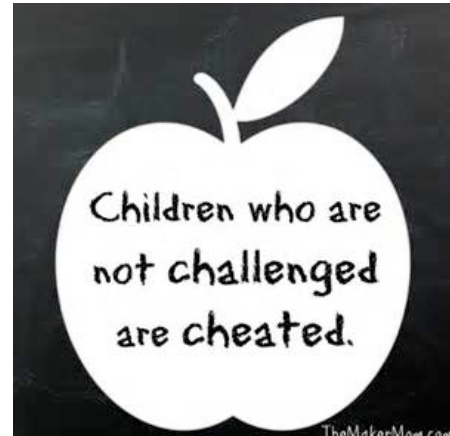
Students became experts in handwriting analysis, fingerprinting, trace evidence, and chromatography during their field trip to the Meadowlands Environmental Center where they worked as Crime Scene Investigators to solve the mystery of the Stolen Terrapin. Practicing Matrix Logic puzzles and breaking out (escape room challenges) added to the challenge and excitement while sharpening their problem-solving and logical thinking skills.

We furthered this theme through literature as we read about Sherlock Holmes in *The Adventures of a Speckled Band*. After reading the story, students were able to choose their project to either further their learning or deepen their understanding of characters, theme and plot. They tackled their own adventure by writing a mystery story and editing the stories of their peers.

We then moved on to the world of cryptography. Understanding ciphers from the time of Caesar to breaking mathematics-based ciphers such as the Affine Cipher, students really rolled up their sleeves to decode these messages. Once we reviewed a variety of ciphers, they created their own cryptography puzzle for their peers to solve. Some of these codes were unbreakable!

Lastly, students grouped together to compete in a multi-school competition called World of Free Enterprise. Their seemingly impossible task was to create a toy to sell, a business plan and perceived financials to present to judges in an

attempt to secure the “Shark Tank”-like bank loan and win the competition.



## Learning Fair

On June 13th, students from the Grades 4-6 Gifted & Talented Program will be exhibiting selections of their work at the Gifted & Talented Learning Fair in the Pierrepont School multi-purpose room from 6-7:30pm. All invited!