



**ENGAGED LEARNING IN THE
FARMINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

March 20, 2023

Farmington High School

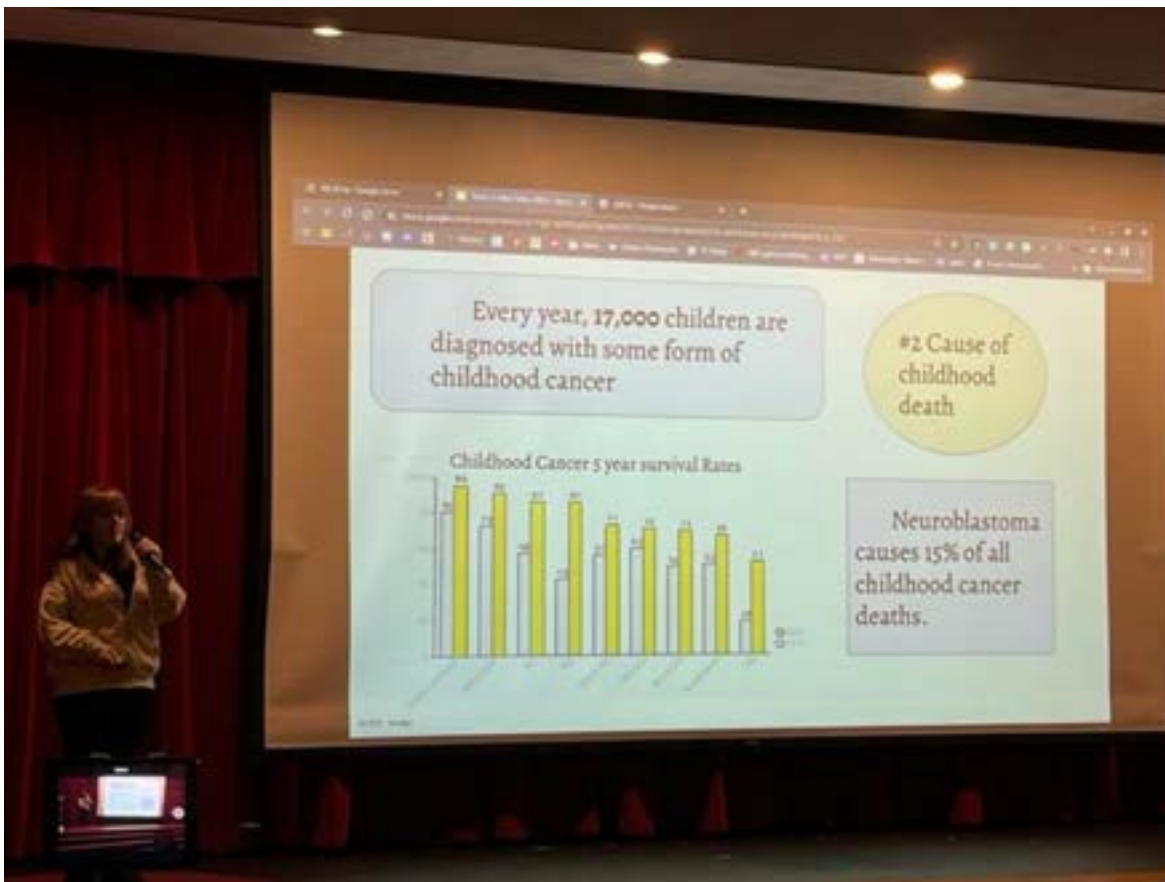
As part of celebrating Black History Month at FHS, on February 15th the FHS Black Student Union moderated a panel to recognize Black Excellence and Achievement in Connecticut. Over 200 FHS students attended the panel in the FHS Library and learned so much from our distinguished panelists.



Irving A. Robbins

Medical Moment

When was the last time you took a moment to educate yourself on your own well-being or factors that could affect your future health and those of people you care about? We commend our 8th graders for taking a moment to educate our IAR community about the interdependent systems of the human body as related to their medical moment topic. Many students chose personally meaningful areas of study related to family, friends or even their own personal medical situations. Students presented on topics from Parkinson's disease to diabetes to broken bones and selective mutism. The engaging newsletters, powerful MedTalks, and captivating screencasts allowed our students to shine as civic-minded contributors as they educated each of us about the causes, effects, treatments and implications of their topic. We are so proud of our students and would like to extend appreciation to our teachers and the medical experts in our community who showed unwavering commitment to this project!



Podcast Challenge

Over the course of the last few weeks, empowered learners at I.A.R. have been researching, scripting, recording, and editing "podcasts with purpose" on a topic of interest. Topics this year included: the insulin shortage, cryptozoology, e-waste, the importance of music education, cybersecurity, worker's rights, and more! Students had the opportunity to conduct interviews with professionals in their field of study, attend feedback workshops facilitated by our 8th graders, and create their own music and sound effects. The Language Arts project culminated with a Celebration of Learning where students posed questions to a panel of experts, listened to each other's podcasts, and identified their favorite podcast on each team. As students interviewed each other about the project, one student reflected: "I learned what it means to persevere. It was so frustrating at first to do more research, re-write, and re-record my podcast - but in the end it was worth it. I'm proud of myself for sticking with it."



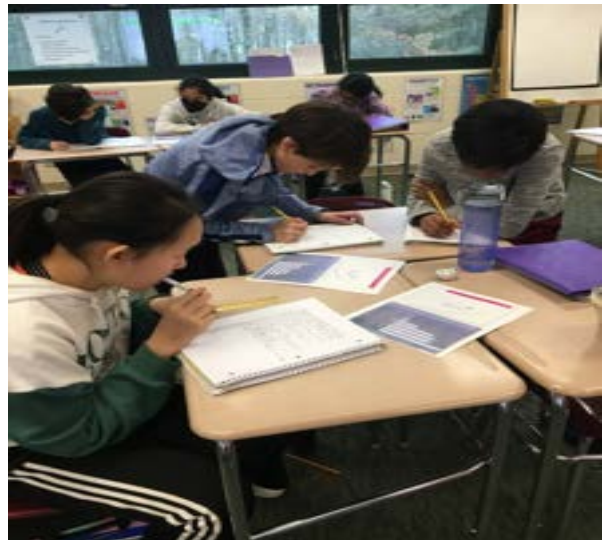
West Woods Upper Elementary School

This month at West Woods, 6th grade students began a new science unit about Human Impact on the Earth through the lens of The Great Pacific Garbage Patch and plastics in the ocean. Did you know that the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, a big accumulation of ocean plastic swirling around in a gyre between Hawaii and California, covers an area three times bigger than the country of France?

We kicked off the unit by watching parts of the documentary, “A Plastic Tide”, which highlighted the dramatic effect that humans have had on the environment including the large amount of plastic found in the ocean as well as the positive impact that a small group of people had on cleaning up local beaches. It inspired the students to act as stewards of the Earth!

To further our study on the issue of plastics in the ocean, we also tackled the rigorous task of developing a procedure for analyzing graphs during science class. Just as nonfiction readers follow certain action steps when reading a book, scientists also follow steps to understand a graph. Students worked in collaborative groups to determine five steps that could be applied to understanding the author’s purpose or call to action of any graph. This data reinforced the problem of plastics in the ocean and motivated us to take action.

We are looking forward to finding ways that we can change our everyday behaviors to start solving the problem that has been created and will be educating and inspiring others to be a part of the solution!



Union School

Union School Welcomes Nash!

All students and staff at Union School have been excited to welcome our new School Resource Officer, Tony Ruggiero, and Nash, his facility/therapy dog. Nash did a great job listening to this group of students read aloud to him about therapy dogs. In the past few weeks, Nash has acquired many fans throughout the school. He is a great listener!



Union School Celebrates Black History Month

In February, the Union School school community celebrated Black History Month. Throughout the month, students studied and learned about the contributions of black Americans through reading, research, and special visitors and guest readers from Farmington High School. At the end of the month we held an assembly hosted by our Student Council and KID (Kindness, Inclusion, Diversity) club.



East Farms

During the interdisciplinary science unit, Forces and Motion, second graders were disciplined thinkers and empowered learners as they worked through the engineering process. The problem was to design a model of a roller coaster using upcycled materials such as pool noodles, cardboard tubes and duct tape. They worked collaboratively to design, build, and test their project. Throughout the process, they reflected on their work as engineers by thinking about what was going well and what needed to be improved. Teams then presented their roller coasters to each other sharing their engineer thinking.



March Madness at East Farms!

Students, faculty and staff joined in community-building spirit days to celebrate Read Across America Week. East Farms was all smiles as we connected fun themed days to reading a variety of books that represent our culturally diverse community and country. As **Civic-Minded** learners we are open to learning about traditions and experiences different from our own. We celebrated the “Power of Words” by wearing expressive t-shirts, reading about inspirational leaders, and collecting quotes from books that encourage us to be our best selves. We were also delighted in listening to stories from guest readers, including parents, grandparents, and FHS students.



West District Elementary School

Tiny Tigers Becoming Global Citizens

Throughout their year of kindergarten, West District Tigers have been developing independence in discussing and thinking about the Vision of the Global Citizen. With developmentally appropriate vocabulary instruction followed by meaningful experiences that reinforce the concepts, learning about these dispositions becomes accessible to our youngest learners. Throughout their days, kindergarteners are purposefully engaged in opportunities for learning that draw upon the transdisciplinary skills of the VOGC. Kindergarteners show these dispositions each day, one recently stating, “When something new is scary, I don’t cry. I am brave.” Building habits of socially and emotionally productive behaviors, beginning in kindergarten, lays the foundation for students to achieve academic and personal excellence. When reflecting upon what it means to be an engaged collaborator, another student shared “Sometimes, I help other kids, and when we go outside we help each other on the swings. We do it all the time. It makes me feel happy because I care about my friends.”



Noah Wallace School

Noah Wallace celebrated Black History Month during February. The Noah Wallace IDEA+ Club and PTO invited Iddi Saaka to share his music, dance, and culture with our entire community. One highlight was when Iddi invited students to play traditional Ghanaian instruments with him. All students also studied an influential African American individual who helped to make a difference and the students taught others about the person's impact.



During professional development on March 2, teachers and paraprofessionals read chapter 7 of Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain and focused on the learning target: ***We can foster a growth mindset and restore our students' natural confidence as learners to shift their academic mindset.*** Teachers and paraprofessionals studied Hammond's suggestions for shifting the academic mindsets of our students and annotated ways that they support students during this process. Some examples included:

- Help students connect with their current expertise and competencies
- Notice and acknowledge when students are acting according to the elements of academic mindset.