



Gifted and Talented Education — AE Wright Middle School

Spring 2023 Newsletter

Hello A.E. Wright GATE Community!

Hope you all had a relaxing Spring Break and enjoyed the Open House. We are in the final stretch of this school year. Since the last newsletter, we've held our 6th annual High School Alumni Night for our current 8th graders and their families and the Incoming GATE Student Showcase.

We raised \$9,700 in our annual GATE fundraiser and sincerely appreciate the donations that will go directly to our GATE classrooms and experiences for our GATE kids.

Our Spring AGP meeting and Parent Education Presentation was held on April 12th, 2023. If you missed that meeting, please find the parent education presentation [here](#). We want to thank Mr. Morgan Appel for an enlightening presentation entitled "Brave New World".

Finally, please find some important information and dates to mark on your calendars and scroll down for the final classroom updates of the year from our amazing GATE teachers.

Some important notes and dates:

AGP Board (2023-2024): If you are interested in volunteering to be on next year's AGP Board (2023-2024), please email us at agpaew@gmail.com. We are looking for volunteers for the following positions:

- 6th Grade Representative(s) and Incoming Families Coordinator(s)
- Fundraising Co-Coordinator
- Parent Education Coordinator
- Social Event/Social Action Coordinator(s)
- Grants Coordinator
- Communications Coordinator

GATE Task Force Application: Our GATE Task Force has one open position for the 2023-2024 school year. *Applications are currently open to any parent with a child currently enrolled in the program or an incoming parent who previously had a student enrolled in the program.* Applicants should be available for meetings during the workday on Wednesdays (approximately 4 per year). The GATE Task Force supports the growth of the GATE program within Las Virgenes Unified School District through short and long-term planning and evaluation. Our vision is to provide continuous support and training related to gifted differentiation districtwide. The task force consists of representatives from the district (assistant

superintendent, elementary principal, district psychologist, and clerical district employee); site representatives (AEW principal, GATE department chairs); and parents (AGP chairperson and an additional parent). ***Parent applications are due by May 31, 2023.*** If interested, please submit an application here: <https://forms.gle/hcNjyuJ38L74GSCq9>

Informal End of the School Year Beach day (Current 6th, 7th and 8th Grade GATE Student and Families): Sunday, June 11, 2023 from 11 AM to 3 PM @ Zuma Beach (Lifeguard Tower #12).

New Incoming GATE (all grades) Student Picnic: Save the date - Sunday, August 20, 2023 from 5 PM to 7:30 PM at Gates Canyon Park (Evite to follow this summer)

And, as always, if you have GATE-specific questions, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Thank you all for your support in keeping our GATE program strong!

Cheers,

Susie Ming
AGP Chair
agpaew@gmail.com

Classroom updates

8th Grade Update

Mrs. Tepper & Ms. Miller 8th grade ELA/SS:

The 8th graders have had a busy yet productive 2nd semester! We finished our unit on *The Diary of Anne Frank* with an emotional day at Los Angeles's Museum of Tolerance. We continued our study of theme and point-of-view by writing our own Valentine-themed narratives, reading/analyzing and even adding an additional scene to Shirley Jackson's "Charles." Our examination of important historical primary documents such as the Declaration of Independence, Bill of Rights, and Constitution integrated social studies and language arts as we read Avi's documentary novel, *Nothing But the Truth*, and witnessed a literary case of "fake news" and the first amendment in action. Our mock Supreme Court trials allowed students to be sworn in as justices and decide on important landmark cases from history. In February, students were given the platform to think critically about global challenges related to population and share their real-life solutions as they competed in an interdisciplinary video contest (world of 8 billion) that combined their science, language arts, and social studies knowledge. In March, each student researched a modern-day example of our Constitution in action culminating in oral presentations of a news article and argument essays on a real-life controversy!

Currently, students are learning about the early republic and the challenges the founding fathers faced while simultaneously reading about a futuristic dystopian world that has tried to rid itself of such issues in Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. We continue to practice our grammar skills and poetry analysis each month with selections that relate to our curriculum such as "America" by Claude McKay and "Burning a Book" by William Stafford.

Our next integrated ELA/SS units focus on an in-depth study of the "The American

Dream,” and what that means for various groups of Americans including ourselves and characters such as Lenny and George in Steinbeck’s *Of Mice and Men*. Our many Socratic Seminars and class discussions allow plenty of opportunities for students to express their opinions, knowledge, and concerns about the world around them.



8th Grade Chief Justices getting ready for court!



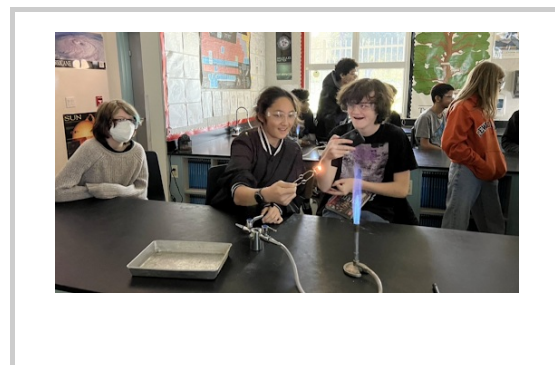
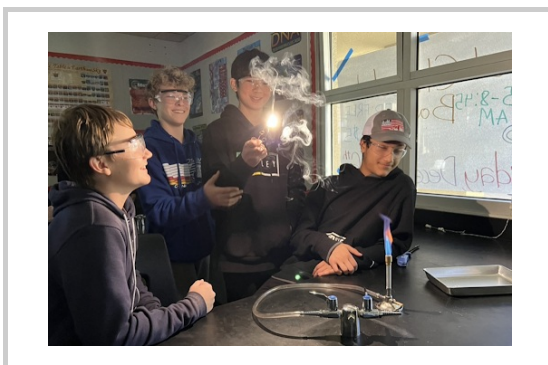
Museum of Tolerance

Mr. Bostrom 8th Grade Science:

This year has been so much fun! Hard to believe that we are already in the final weeks of the school year. The second semester in science class has focused on the fundamentals of physics. Students have learned about Newton’s Laws of Motion and have done several experiments surrounding each law. They have also explored the various types of potential and kinetic energy, and built their own Rube Goldberg machines to demonstrate.

The final stretch of the year will focus on gravity, electricity, and magnetism. Students will also soon be starting their final project of the year, where they will build race cars powered by mouse traps. The project is always a blast and requires students to apply many of the concepts they have learned throughout the year in a final group challenge. Looking forward to a great rest of the school year!

Fun With Science!



7th Grade Update

Mrs. Paik-7th grade ELA/SS:

What happens when strangers meet? This is one of the important themes in seventh grade history. The second semester has taken us to new places around the world to explore that theme: growing armies and conquering other provinces in

feudal Japan, an exploration of the advantages and potential disadvantages of living and trading in sites of encounter like Quanzhou, China, and Calicut, India, (including creating and trading our own items in our incredible Medieval Market), and our current study of Africa, past, present, and future. The students have collaborated and worked individually on evaluating primary sources, writing from different perspectives, and simulating historical events and situations to understand better people from times past and even ourselves.

In ELA, the students have crafted informative essays to raise awareness of issues they care about (our own website with essays will be published soon!). We continue to remind ourselves and learn more about some intricacies of grammar (the power of language!). We've explored logical fallacies (and created some of our own), and discussed and analyzed novels in book clubs. Currently, we are reading and responding to many different kinds of poetry and honing our argumentative skills in discussion and writing. We look forward to reading the powerful novel, *The Giver*, and Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* together in class this spring.



Reenacting a game played by Japanese aristocracy



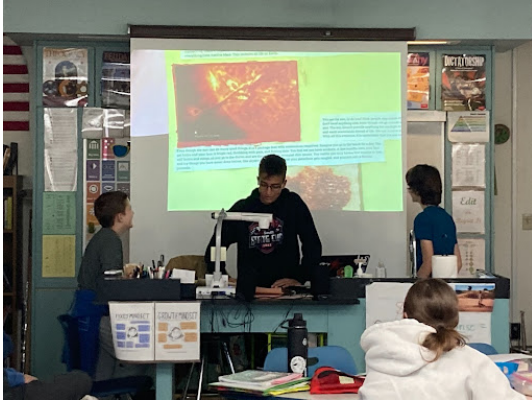
Samurai School Skits



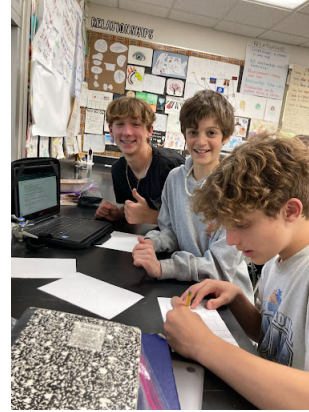
Field Trip to Huntington Gardens



Boat design and race with (blow dryer) monsoon winds



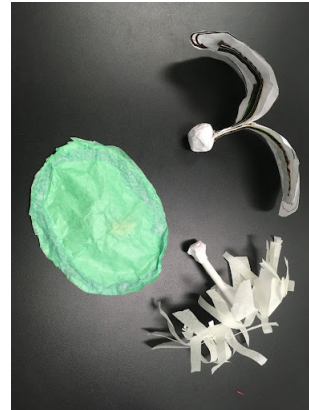
A logically fallacious campaign against the sun



Writing mini storybooks about leadership in Africa



Students show off the mutant and typical bees found in their hive.



Seed dispersal devices created with up cycled household materials.

Mrs Servin' 7th Grade Science:

So much has happened since October! Students have gone from studying microscopic cells and exploring body systems to exploring genetics and adaptive traits! Students have been flexing their imaginations and scientific knowledge to complete a variety of creative projects. Students used their knowledge of cells and body systems to design their own organism. Next students modeled a variety of DNA sequences and combined them with an existing animal to create a genetically engineered super pet. We examined genetic mutations in bee genomes, expressed their DNA to build a whole hive full of mutant bees, and then analyzed how those mutant bees would perform in different environments. Recently students completed an engineering challenge where they had to use biomimicry to design a seed dispersal device that could be launched off our 2nd floor balcony. While learning about adaptive traits, students were able to participate in ASU's March Mammal Madness competition. Students had a blast predicting the winners of different simulated battles and following their favorite animals as they competed. As we wrap up this year we will be learning about how these adaptive traits evolved and how organisms interact with each other at an ecosystem level.



Students analyze the functions of cells in a theoretical organism



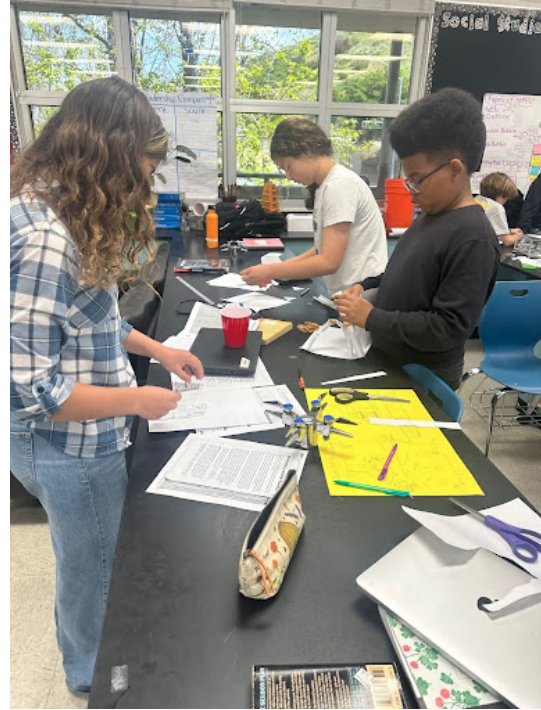
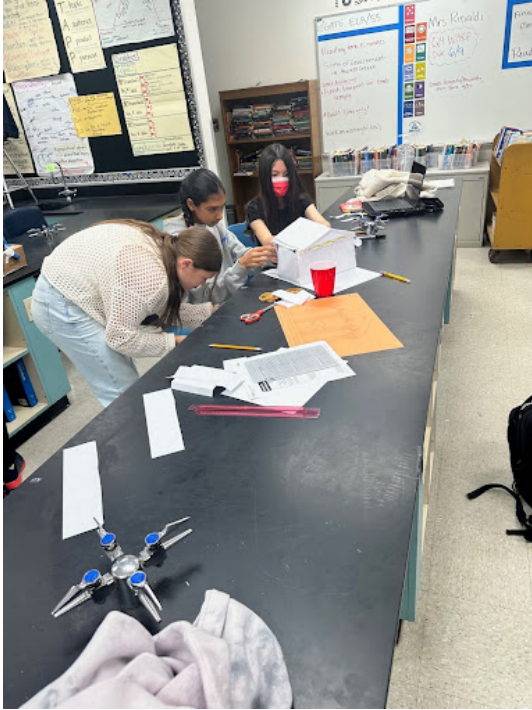
Students test their reflexes while learning about the nervous system.

6th Grade Update

Mrs. Rinaldi 6th ELA/SS:

We have had a busy semester 2. We finished a second round of book clubs. We learned all about Ancient China and even wrote Traveler's Tales. I love this project because it truly connects language arts and social studies. We then created actual books! They will be on display at Back to School night in May, and then your students may take them home. Lately we have been working on our listening comprehension skills with some interesting podcast snippets. We are also working on writing an informational essay. We studied all types of informational text types(compare and contrast, cause effect, description, sequence, chronological order, and problem solution.) The students were able to choose a prompt topic and text type and are currently writing their amazing essays. We have written narrative, argumentative, informational, and response to literature writing pieces all year. They are almost ready to be 7th graders! In Social Studies, we are nearing the end of Ancient Greece. We have learned about Ancient Greek life, assembly, debate, theater, mythology, olympics, architecture, and more. On 4/26 we are taking a field trip to the Getty Villa to check out some beautiful Greek and Roman art. We also have a creative writing "virtual field trip" lessons on 4/25 and 4/27. The students will work in small groups with 826la and Barnacle and Barnacle publishing and writing books together. It will then be printed and they will have their own copy to keep!

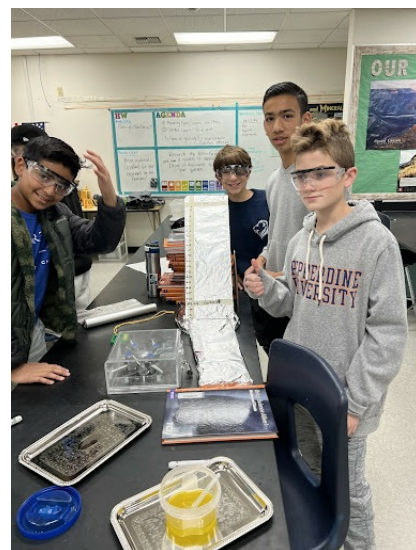
We are going to be finishing the year with Ancient Rome and we are reading *The Watsons Go to Birmingham*. There will be a final end of year project: GATER tank(think Shark Tank). The students will be able to invent, create, present, and persuade via a video project. This project is always a favorite!



Mrs. Herrera's 6th Grade Science:

The 6th graders focused on exploring different phenomena and how those events connect to larger events on our planet. The students discovered the driving forces of plate tectonics and how that can lead to earthquakes and volcanoes. Groups collaborated on an engineering project to design, build, and test three-story buildings on our shake table. During our volcano unit, students researched different volcanoes and gave presentations. Additionally, lab groups worked together to design a question related to different types of volcanic eruptions and how it related to the lava's viscosity. They created their own experiments and tested out different lava flows using different liquids and temperatures. Students observed rock collections and came up with their own categories of how to group the rock samples based on certain characteristics. The class modeled rock transformations by using starburst candies and created posters to demonstrate their understanding. This year we had the wonderful opportunity to visit the Natural History Museum where students were in awe of the minerals and gemstones! Students were also able to observe dinosaur fossils and much more! Currently, groups are researching different space topics and creating projects to be displayed at Open House! This year, the class is reading the novel *Hidden Figures* and participating in literature circles to discuss topics such as segregation and the roles of women in science. We will wrap up the year with our weather and climate unit and build weather instruments and also engineer coolers and solar ovens!





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