

# LEAP NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2018, ISSUE 2

## KEEPING THE MOTIVATION GOING

Another season has gone by since the last newsletter and as I am sitting writing this its 50 degrees and sunny outside! Slowly but surely we are getting into the time where student motivation seems to dwindle a bit. Yes, even for our gifted kids! I came across an article that provided these four tips for both parents and teachers.

### Tips for Keeping Your Gifted Student Motivated

- **Help your child set both short- and long-term academic goals** for themselves, focusing on accomplishments that are meaningful to them. Goals set by parents or teachers for them may have little meaning, so allow them to weigh in what their goals and ambitions will be.
- **Talk long term.** Help your child to understand the long-term benefits of school and the daily responsibilities it requires. While one particular assignment or project may not seem all that important now, teach them that it will help them to be successful in school now—leading to things that they may value in the future, such as acceptance at the college or university of their choice, scholarships and more.
- **Follow your child's passions.** Find the things that your child is naturally excited about and allow them to explore those interests.
- **Encourage your child to track their progress throughout the year**, either by charting/listing important milestones or making videos of them performing certain tasks. It's rewarding for gifted students to see how they have developed and mastered different skills throughout the year.

I will most certainly be working on one and four for the rest of the year!

On a final note, Hamden Hall Country Day School is once again offering its Summer Engineering and Science Academy. For parents that are unfamiliar with this program, it is a one week summer program that offers STEM activities to students entering grades 5, 6, 7 and 8. It is by application only and the best part is, IT'S FREE!!!

If your child is selected they participate for free.

For more information go to the following website: <http://www.hamdenhall.org>

Applications are due May 11, 2018!

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **Are you in the know?**

To get up-to-date information and photos regarding LEAP and other news regarding gifted educations by following me on Twitter!

**MonicaHarned@LEAPinOrange**

Here's how!

1. If you do not already have the Twitter app installed on your smartphone, tablet or computer, you will need to install it.
2. Set up an account or sign in
3. Find me at:  
**@LEAPinOrange**
4. Be sure you select **Monica Harned**
5. Click FOLLOW
6. I will then confirm your account.

## Talent Pool Unit Overviews

### Grade 6 at Peck Place School, Race Brook School and Turkey Hill School

The sixth graders have almost completed their bridge proposals! Soon their bridges will be constructed and ready for presentations. I think the challenging part of the construction process is the actual calculation. Most groups are finding that precision is so important to the success of a bridge. This year, I have also noticed how important it is to emphasize proactive collaboration and teamwork to be successful. I feel like this is a crucial skill for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and students are reaping the benefits.

As the unit culminates, the students are very excited and anxious to test their bridges under the weight of a brick. I have a feeling these groups are going to be very surprised with the results.

To view pictures of the groups completed bridges, you will have to follow us on TWITTER @ [monicaharned@LEAPinOrange](https://twitter.com/monicaharned).

The skills addressed in the unit are as follows:

- S1: Develop a persuasive letter using specific characteristics of persuasion
- S2: Recognize attributes of bridges
- S3: Analyze different types of bridges
- S4: Determine scale
- S5. Modify uses of materials
- S6. Produce a model bridge with precision
- S7: Evaluate
- S8: Cooperate in small groups

### Grade 5 at Race Brook School

Students at Peck Place School, Race Brook School and Turkey Hill School are just about to begin designing their virtual bridges through West Point Bridge Designer. The students design 4 types of bridges that have to meet a specified budget and also fall between a specified range of compression and tension forces. Once completed, students will be placed in small groups and begin their final construction project, which will include writing a proposal, designing a blue print and constructing a model bridge. This is longest part of the unit but also the most rewarding.

I have posted the West Point Bridge Designer guidelines on Google Classroom so that students may download the program at home to work on. Parents, now you can join your child in the virtual bridge building process. This can be an interesting and challenging way to work together, not to mention FUN!!

Follow us on Twitter to get the most up-to-date photos and other information regarding bridges.

This challenging West Point Bridge Designer program has introduced students to the engineering design process.

- S1: Build and test model bridges designed to carry a live load
- S2: Investigate how compression and tension affect bridges strength
- S3: Determine and remain within a set budget

Other skills will include:

- S1: Develop a persuasive letter using specific characteristics of persuasion
- S2: Recognize attributes of bridges
- S3: Analyze different types of bridges
- S4: Determine scale
- S5. Modify uses of materials
- S6. Produce a model bridge with precision
- S7: Evaluate
- S8: Cooperate in small groups

### Grade 5 at Peck Place School and Turkey Hill School

The students at Peck Place School and Turkey Hill School are working on independent studies until new students join the group in a few short weeks. Peck Place selected a Type 3 investigation on the advantages and disadvantages of both solar power and nuclear power. They have contacted experts in both fields to interview and have designed a presentation to go along with their newly acquired information. If time allows they will be creating models of each type of energy source to enhance their presentation.

Over at Turkey Hill, the interest was in designing and building Native American shelters. We researched long houses, Teepees, wigwams and others. Currently, models are being built using a 1":10' scale. The models are also being constructed as authentically as possible. Therefore, bark and other natural elements are being utilized in the building process.

### Grade 4 at Peck Place School, Race Brook School and Turkey Hill School

The fourth graders are working on designing video games using the Scratch program. Scratch is platform that is used to "easily" create video games. We have been working on this program for several weeks and are just getting the hang of it. There is a tremendous amount of skill that is needed to create a video game, I am just so impressed that these 4<sup>th</sup> grade students are up for the challenge.

At this point, the students should have designed at least 2 levels in their video game. Scratch is accessible from home and you can play your child's game and give him/her feedback. You too will be impressed by their skill in video game design.

Skills addressed during this portion of the unit are:

S1: Identifying coordinates on a graph

S2: Identifying quadrants

S3: Plotting coordinates

S4: Thinking creatively

S5: Analyzing different games

S6: Creating a prototype

S7: Experimenting with different scripts

S8: Collaborating with peers

I hope you enjoyed the winter edition of the newsletter. As always, I appreciate any feedback or suggestions you may have to improve my communication with you. And remember to follow us on Twitter!

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Fondly,  
Monica Harned