

Fall 2016



Guilderland Central School District



Exploring with Mindful Creativity and Curiosity The E=mc2 program: The Power of Curiosity at GHS

Although the school year has just begun, the 15 students who are involved in this year’s independent research course, “Exploring with Mindful Creativity and Curiosity” or simply “E=mc2,” are already thinking innovatively.

Learning as exploration

The E=mc2 program allows students, the majority of whom are Help Desk members, to earn an elective credit and explore a topic of their choice throughout the year.

Through gathering evidence, both qualitative and quantitative, as well as researching and reading prevailing theories surrounding their topics, students hope to gain a deeper understanding and analytical viewpoint of their project.

Last year, topics ranged from building telescopes to researching foot pronation, to designing a recording studio in a library room.

High school librarians Bernard Bott and Melissa Gergen act as the program’s research coordinators.

“I love that we were granted the opportunity to do this,” said Bott. “Things are constantly in motion with this class and it’s exciting to see what happens when interest meets motivation head on.”

This year, the students’ projects are just as diverse as the last, with a few more “artistic” topics, that Bott says, “should give the program an interesting angle.”

All of the projects’ main objective will be to follow a guided and/or open inquiry model, an idea that believes the process is worth as much, if not more, than the product. This philosophy allows for not only the freedom to choose and explore an issue or topic, but to experiment and implement findings based on research.

“Many students are building things (i.e. hydroponic gardens, robots, EEG-based machines), and while these projects may have a tangible end product, we still want those students focused on owning their

Does your child meet these new requirements?

State now requires meningitis vaccination in grades 7, 12

The answer depends on more than just your child’s age and grade level. When, or if, a child has previously been vaccinated for meningococcal disease will determine when shots will be necessary under the state’s new requirements that went into effect Sept. 1, 2016:

- One dose of meningococcal vaccine before seventh grade. If a student had the first dose as a sixth grader, then another dose is not required until grade 12.
- A total of two doses are required before grade 12. Most students entering grade 12 received their first dose when they were younger and will be due for their second dose, or booster.
- The only teens who will not need a second dose before grade 12 are those who received their first dose on or after their 16th birthday.

For more information, please visit our Safety and Wellness subsite at <http://www.guilderlandschools.org>

Continued on page 2

www.guilderlandschools.org

learning and the learning process,” said Bott.

“There are other students working on more research-based topics like dreaming, the human brain, and the education system. [No matter what kind of project], we want students making a conscious effort to ask what it is they want to learn, and why it matters,” Bott continued.

Febronia Mansour, a junior, is in her second year of the program, and admits that in the beginning, the open-inquiry model was a bit of a shock to her system.

“My brain is very systematic,” but with the help of Bott and Gergen, “they will not let us fail,” she said.

“[Bott and Gergen] are phenomenal in achieving this perfect balance of helping us out but also knowing when to step back and give us the opportunity to learn or ‘fall on our faces’ as Mr. Bott likes to say. With this freedom, we’re responsible for things like creating our own websites, choosing a medium of assessment that shows evidence of



learning, as well as less specified due dates, which makes it of the utmost importance to manage our time and set periodic goals,” said Mansour.

Mansour is in the advanced level of E=mc2 having participated last year, as well as completing a summer prerequisite.

According to Mansour, “the main difference between the two levels is the amount of responsibility and “freedom” students have. The first level of the

course is “more-guided” inquiry, she said.

Mansour’s favorite thing about participating in E=mc2?

“The passion that exudes from all who are a part of it. A lot of students might give off a vibe that they don’t care about school, but I think that’s only because they’re simply uninterested in what they’re required learn. In E=mc2 however, the ability to choose a topic completely eradicates this. We’re able to explore what we’re really interested in and get credit for it!”

Mansour was sorry to say goodbye to her topic on foot pronation last year, but is already consumed, “in the best way possible,” she assured, about her topic this year on neuroplasticity.

Bott said, “I don’t know what success looks like in this program from a traditional standpoint, but when students think about something, analyze their own thoughts, and can be passionate while doing it, that is success to me. Our goal is to help students understand that learning can start anywhere, but ends with them. Curiosity is vital to every student’s future and we are hoping to be the curators of curiosity, but the students must own it.”

Mr. Bott and Mrs. Gergen and invite community members to follow the E=mc2 students along on their inquiry journeys. View the program site and individual student project pages at <http://bit.ly/guilderlandemc2>.

2016-17 E=mc2 Projects

Andrew - The Solution to Being Awake

Michel - Proteinary Muscle Repair

Christian - Bringing Education into Modernity

Jonah - At the Crossroads of Education

Priyan - The Human API

Julia - Art as Self Expression: A Work in Progress

Sagar - Morphic: The Art of Reality

Mateen - Wheels and Electromagnetism

Silma - GSCD Technology Integration: A Process in Action

Taniya - A Look Into The Anti-Vaccination Movement: Why Refuse?

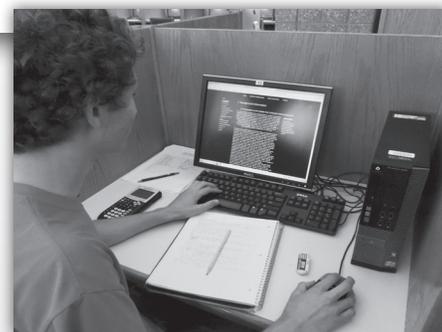
Rafi - Critique of Education

Lydia - The Brain Bot

Febronia - The My Brain Project

Emily - Bartender Robot

Dan - Hydroponics: Who Needs Dirt?





Annual notifications for parents/guardians

The Guilderland Central School District is required by law to provide the following notifications to parents on an annual basis. Additional notifications on topics such as body mass index screening, sex offender notification, and pesticide applications may be found on the district website: www.guilderlandschools.org.

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT

The federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) allows school districts to release student information (name, grade, photograph, address, academic interest, artwork, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, periods of school attendance, graduation, awards received, and future educational plans) for use in school district publications and within district websites and social media sites, or to the media for public relations purposes. Parents who object to the release of their child's information and/or photograph should have notified both their child's building principal and the district's communications office in writing by Sept. 16, 2016.

In addition, as required under FERPA, the district would like to inform parents/guardians and students 18 years of age or older currently in attendance of their right to:

- Inspect and review the student's education records,
- Request that records be amended to ensure that they are accurate and not misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights, and
- Control disclosures from the student's education records, with certain exceptions.

RELEASE OF STUDENT INFORMATION TO MILITARY RECRUITERS

Pursuant to the federal No Child Left Behind Act, the school district must disclose to military recruiters and institutions of higher learning, upon request, the names, addresses and telephone numbers of our high school junior and senior students. However, parents or students may request, in writing, that the district not release such information. Parents, or students who are at least 18 years old, have the option to withhold their consent to the release of this information, and should have contacted the high school principal's office by Oct. 14, 2016.

ANNUAL PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW

All Guilderland Central School District parents or legal guardians have the right to request Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) quality ratings and composite effectiveness scores for their child's current year teacher(s) and principal(s). Visit the district website to download a teacher/principal score request form. An appeal of the APPR by the teacher or principal will delay providing this information until such time as the appeal is concluded. ♦

*GCSD respects the dignity
of all students*

The New York State Dignity for All Students Act (DASA)

The DASA Act took effect in July 2013, with the goal of providing students with a safe, supportive, educational environment that is free from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment and bullying. DASA states that no student shall be subjected to harassment or discrimination by employees or students on school property or at a school function based on their actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex.

If you are a victim of, or witness to, an act of bullying, harassment or discrimination, talk to your teacher, guidance counselor or a Dignity Act Coordinator:

Altamont Elementary School:
Principal Peter Brabrant, 861-8528

Guilderland Elementary School:
Principal Allan Lockwood, 869-0293

Lynnwood Elementary School:
Principal Alicia Rizzo, 355-7930

Pine Bush Elementary School:
Principal Christopher Sanita, 357-2770

Westmere Elementary School:
Principal Beth Bini, 456-3771

Farnsworth Middle School:
Principal Michael Laster;
House Principals Bill Aube and Michael Pipa,
456-6010

Guilderland High School:
Principal Thomas Lutsic;
Assistant Principals Amy Hawrychak, Ann Marie
McManus and Matthew Ward, 861-8591

District-wide Coordinator:
Assistant Superintendent for Instruction Demian
Singleton, 456-6200, ext. 3119

*Reporting forms are available on our website
under "Forms."*

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Christine Hayes, President
Christopher McManus, Vice President

Catherine Barber
Barbara Fratterigo
Teresa Gitto
Seema Rivera
Allan Simpson
Judy Slack
Gloria Towle-Hilt

SUPERINTENDENT

Marie Wiles, Ph.D.

EDITOR

Aubree Kammler

Published by the Guilderland Central
School District in cooperation with the
Capital Region BOCES Communications
Service. David Snyder/Printer

Guilderland

Central School District

8 School Road, P.O. Box 18
Guilderland Center, NY 12085



Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Albany, NY
Permit No. 730

4

In case you missed it...

Farnsworth Middle School Butterfly Station and Organic Garden's successful 18th season

Summer 2016 was one for the record books! The butterfly house saw over 1500 visitors and the native plant garden donated over one ton of organic produce to local food shelters. A special thanks to Butterfly Station Director Jennifer Phillips, Organic Garden Coordinator Christina Jager, and the student volunteers for all their hard work.

Visit the GCSD Facebook page at www.facebook.com/GuilderlandCSD to view a photo gallery of Summer 2016 at the Butterfly Station and Organic Garden.



THE SCHOOL TAX RELIEF (STAR) PROGRAM

Under a new Property Tax Relief Credit, New York homeowners may be eligible for a property tax relief credit.

Visit www.tax.ny.gov/pit/property/property-tax-relief.htm to learn more.

**GCSD is a tax cap compliant school district*

On Saturday, June 25, 420 Guilderland High School students walked across the stage of the SEFCU Arena at the University at Albany to receive their diplomas and begin the next chapter of their lives beyond of the halls of Guilderland High School. Congratulations to all of the members of the Class of 2016 and best wishes to as you enter into a bright and exciting future! To see more photos of the 2016 graduates, visit the district's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/GuilderlandCSD.



GCSD