

Connecting Classroom Grants

Reimagining recess.

Northeast and Fall Creek elementary schools reached out to IPEI to help make space, time and training available to members of their educational community and learn how to help children take risks, play fairly, and be imaginative with loose parts and other materials.

According to final reports, as a result of this training, staff members were seen: “outside with the kids {...} not in a disciplinary position. They open the kids' eyes to new materials and new possibilities, distracting kids from momentary upsets, and playing with them.”

Watching the students, one observer saw students: “doing a lot more active playing and interacting through imagination, exchanging leadership roles, problem-solving, taking age- and individually-appropriate risks of all kinds, giving each other space to play in parallel or cooperatively, depending on the players. It's simply wonderful.”

“All-in-all, I believe that Reimagining Recess has been a tremendously positive and beautiful change in the children's experience of school, I'm delighted that it has occurred, and I look forward to the opening up of even more possibilities. “

Hominids at DeWitt:

DeWitt Middle School's science instructor, Wayne Gottlieb, wanted to teach evolution in a hands-on way. Connecting this unit to an understanding of archaeology and the study of human and hominid development, Wayne reached out to renowned expert John Gurche to specially craft hominid and other bones, construct a dig site and help students evaluate their findings during the dig to better understand the impact of evolution.

Following his work with the students John noted:

“A few students refused to stop digging when the lunch bell rang, and I took this as a good sign. I think one of the best things this kind of program can do is plant a seed or two of curiosity and excitement about the subject that may resurface years later.”

Co-Teacher Callie Bryant stated:

“I believe this project and program gave students real life problem solving skills; they had to work with a group and individually to develop an analysis based on their observation. It was a truly amazing project.”

Spanish at South Hill:

South Hill Elementary was proud to come together as a team with IPEI's support and spend time energy and enthusiasm to find ways to embed Spanish learning across all grade levels and all curricula. Teachers, staff and parents came together to move Spanish out of “Spanish class” and into every class. IPEI supported this endeavor as a potential model for language inclusion throughout the Ithaca City School District. Information about South Hill's community can be found at: <https://la-escuelita.weebly.com/>