

# Gifted Update

## ALPHA Reading: Greenview Grades 4—6

GIS—Mrs. Gina Arnold

ALPHA Reading students in grades 4—6 are nearing the end of their novel studies—or may have completed them before the winter break. The sixth grade ALPHA class had a special visitor, Miss Bethany, from the Cuyahoga County Library! She spent time giving book-talks and introducing the students to brand new books and authors. The students had the opportunity to ask questions and get recommendations! I hope to schedule a guest speaker for the fourth and fifth grade ALPHA students during the second semester.

The following is a brief summary of each book that the students are currently reading during ALPHA reading:

**Fourth Grade ALPHA Reading:** *Masterpiece*, by Elise Broach

What happens when a boy and beetle become friends? When the boy is eleven-years-old James and the bug is a beetle named Marvin, they solve an art museum heist! During this novel study, we are exploring the themes of friendship, family and values as we enter into an art mystery and the small world of a very clever beetle!

**Fifth Grade ALPHA Reading:** *Counting by 7's*, by Holly Goldberg Sloan

This book is the story of Willow Chance, a twelve-year-old girl who has been identified at an early age as “gifted.” Willow loses her parents in a car accident. What follows is Willow’s search to find a place where she belongs. In equal parts an exploration of the pain of loss and the triumph of moving forward, the novel looks at how one person can change the lives of many, often without trying. **Continued on page 3**



Lillian Anderson, 4th grade STEP UP, with her mobile inspired by Alexander Calder.

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### Special points of interest

- South Euclid Lyndhurst Schools continue to act out their mission to educate, inspire and empower students to be high achieving, contributing members of a global society.

## Third Grade STEP UP

GIS—Gina Arnold

It has been a pleasure getting to know and work with this amazing group of third graders. They have done a spectacular job with higher level thinking skills as we make our way through Bloom's Taxonomy. The children have written stories showing their ability to apply knowledge and using [www.puzzlemaker.com](http://www.puzzlemaker.com) they created crossword puzzles to demonstrate their competence of analyzing words. These students are not afraid of hard work and perseverance!

## Fourth Grade STEP UP

Fourth grade STEP UP students are engaged in a unit on famous artists. This study stems from the novel that we have been reading in class titled, *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*, by E.L. Konigsburg. The story is about a brother and sister who run away and end up living in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. So far, we have studied Michelangelo and Alexander Calder. The students are currently working on a research project on a famous artist of their choice, with an artistic twist. After the students finish their planning and research, they will create a snowman in the style of the artist.

## Fifth Grade STEP UP

Fifth grade STEP UP students have been busy learning about Dr. Howard Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences. This theory recognizes the multifaceted profile of the human mind and explains that each person possesses several intelligences in greater or lesser degrees. The intelligences are: verbal-linguistic: word intelligence, logical-mathematical: number and reasoning intelligence, visual-spatial: picture intelligence, musical-rhythmic: music and rhythm intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic: body intelligence, interpersonal: social intelligence, intrapersonal: self-intelligence, and naturalist: natural environment intelligence. The students are enjoying the activities and the opportunity to analyze and evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses.

## Sixth Grade STEP UP

GIS: Bob Bell

Besides Invention Convention, sixth grade STEP UP students will be doing a Crime Stoppers project that will incorporate the forensic sciences. A crime has been committed and our teams will be asked to apply investigative techniques to solve the mystery. We have already started analyzing handwriting samples. Next will be fingerprints, blood splatters, DNA testing and more. Don't worry, it is only a simulation!



Jamie Johnson shares her mystery story from the "Author's Chair."



Sixth graders role-playing as a part of Crime Stoppers.

## STEP UP Grades 3—6 : Invention Convention

All STEP UP students will be participating in the Invention Convention on Tuesday March 15th at Greenview Upper Elementary.

The Invention Convention is not a science fair, but a STEM-feeder program designed to expose students in grades K—8 to multiple problem-solving methods, honing real-life skills that will lead to exceptional careers!

The inventive curriculum focuses on:

1. Identifying a Problem
2. Problem-Solving and Critical-Thinking Processes to Solve the Problem
3. Developing the Invention Idea and Designing a Prototype of the Solution

You can find more information about the Invention Convention by visiting [www.inventionconvention.org](http://www.inventionconvention.org)

Third grade students had an Invention Convention Kick-off hosted by Dr. Debra Barrickman. The students learned what it means to be an inventive or divergent thinker. They had an opportunity to work together in groups to turn a bag full of “junk” into a new and useful invention. Fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students attended a workshop where they interacted with a patent attorney, Mr. Bill Jefferies and Mr. Jefferies’s son who is an inventor. His son has invented and has a patent on an artificial finger joint. Hopefully, these guest speakers got the “creative juices” of our students going as they begin thinking about their inventions for this year.

## ALPHA Reading: Continued from page 1

**Sixth Grade ALPHA Reading:** *A Mango-Shaped Space*, by Wendy Mass

Thirteen-year-old Mia has managed to keep her “condition” a secret ever since being called a freak in third grade. Mia has synesthesia, where sounds, numbers, and letters are experienced in color. As Mia struggles in school and deals with her feelings of belonging, she learns that there are others out there who are just like her.

Miss Bethany, from the Cuyahoga County Library talks with 6th grade ALPHA students.



ALPHA Reading utilizes the guidelines of Shared Inquiry. Shared Inquiry is an active and collaborative search for answers to questions of meaning about text. It is a method of learning that

promotes deeper thinking through reading, discussion, and writing. The students are involved in discussions in which they answer open-ended questions, support their ideas with evidence from the story, and comment on the views and opinions of others.



Third graders in the process of inventing.



Sixth graders with speaker, Mr. Jefferies.

**It is not enough to simply teach children to read; we have to give them something worth reading. Something that will stretch their imaginations—something that will help them make sense of their own lives and encourage them to reach out toward people whose lives are quite different from their own.”**

**Katherine Paterson**  
Award-winning children's author



## Memorial STEP UP

GIS—Bob Bell

STEP UP is rolling along at the Junior High School, literally, with our robots team working diligently toward our first competition. Our STEP UP, ALPHA, and other volunteer students have been meeting before school three days a week building Lego robots and programming the brick to perform various tasks worth points toward winning a competition. Follow this link if you would like more information.

[www.firstlegoleague.org](http://www.firstlegoleague.org)



### Students at Memorial working on their robotics projects.

#### Gifted Programming

In South Euclid Lyndhurst, gifted intervention specialist and classroom teachers work together to serve our students who are identified as gifted. There are several strengths to this model:

1. Gifted students are gifted all the time—not just for the period or part of one day that they may be pulled out of their regular classrooms. The model that SEL is using allows for the gifted student to be engaged in higher order thinking skills and challenging activities for more time.
2. Gifted education is not the responsibility of one teacher. Just as special needs students have a cadre of teachers to adapt curriculum for their needs—gifted learners in this service model may have more educators planning for their needs.
3. Gifted education includes strategies and techniques that meet the needs of the gifted student—gifted education is not a place. It is a myth to believe that gifted education can only take place in a resource room. In fact, taking gifted strategies and techniques out of the gifted resource room helps students to understand that “challenge skills” and higher level thinking are meant to be employed all of the time and not used for only a short period of time during one period or one day.

Both seventh and eighth graders have now performed their Mock Trial. Our seventh graders recently walked to the South Euclid municipal court and executed a prosecution and defense case on a trial called Hazing. Judge Gayle Williams-Byers presided over the court. She had a candid discussion with the students and also allowed them to sit in on some arraignments.

During the Mock Trial both sides presented their arguments well. The defendant was Jack Robinson played by Isaac Alexander. He was found not guilty of criminally negligent homicide, and voluntary manslaughter, but will spend some time behind bars having been found guilty of hazing in the first degree. The eighth graders served as jurors and witnesses and preformed admirably.



**Seventh Graders go to Court.**

The perfect segway from the Mock Trial will be moving on to our debates. We have thoroughly discusses the debating process and not it's time to show! Our topics are Capital Punishment, Gay Marriage, Violent Video Games, Immigration, and Animal Rights. The students will be ready to perform their debates soon. Please join us if you can. I will let you know the schedule.



One of the wonderful opportunities we have this year at Memorial is the study hall / lunch enrichment period. It has allowed us to have various cognitive activities such as chess tournaments, extended research time, and other activities that engage the brain.



The seventh and eighth graders have concluded the Stock Market Challenge. This on-line simulation encourages students to learn about the stock market and practical money issues. This is our second year and I am proud to announce the students have made amazing strides from the results of last year.

We had a team in first place for about three weeks of the ten-week challenge and ended up in fourth place. This is out of over 130 teams! This is a huge accomplishment and celebrates the amazing ability of our students to learn quickly and perform at a high level.

Our next large project will be an Entrepreneurial unit where teams will have to create their own business and design a business model. This will be

## Opportunities for gifted students at Brush

Several South Euclid Lyndhurst students in our gifted education program had the opportunity to engage in a wonderful workshop hosted by the Educational Service Center of Cuyahoga County. Students learned about erudite topics such as Leadership Styles, Importance of Vision, Reaching Consensus, Team Building, and Creating Positive Environments for Success. These topics were covered through examples and activities designed to promote quality leadership. The students will be able to use these techniques in various projects in their high school settings and throughout the course of their promising futures.

The next workshop for our high school students will be on the topic of Public Speaking and will be held at the ESC in February.



**Chess tournament.**

## 24 Challenge Math Tournament

Games are a regular part of students' lives, no matter their grade level. Students play games throughout the day on their computers, the internet, and their cell phones. When games are played at school and target essential academic content, they can have a positive effect on student achievement. There are even research studies that show using academic games in the classroom can be associated with percentile points gains in student achievement. This is a relatively strong finding.

Fifth grade students have been playing the 24 Game, as time has allowed, since November. Each of the eight math classes in the fifth grade will have in-class tournament to decide on the top five math 24 students in the class. On February 18th, these 40 fifth grade students will participate in a 24 Challenge Math Tournament. This is a great opportunity for all fifth grade students to become stronger in using math facts to solve equations mentally.



## Hands On Equations

GIS—Marcia Armbruster

Fifth grade ALPHA students are using Hands-On Equations materials to provide a concrete foundation for algebra. It uses a visual and kinesthetic approach to demystify

abstract algebraic concepts. This hands-on, intuitive approach enhances student self-esteem and interest in mathematics. The students are loving this math program!



## 4th Grade ALPHA Math

Greenview fourth graders have been using the higher level thinking strategies of analysis and evaluation, combined with multi-step and multi-operational math strategies, to play the 24 Game. They then continued on to the "Create" level of Bloom's Taxonomy to make original 24 cards for all of their ALPHA math peers districtwide. In addition, these students have begun working on a Math Blog using Kidblog, a private, secure site where teachers and students can share writing, in this case, writing about math strategies using various operations and methods. Student then use this cross-curricular experience to analyze and comment on work on their peers.

## 6th Grade ALPHA Math

Greenview sixth grade ALPHA students have been focusing on algebra, either with an introduction to Mental Mathematics and online higher level algebra games, or experimenting with Hands-on-Equations, where they use kinesthetic and visual learning to manipulate algebraic equations. Both groups of sixth grade ALPHA students are now using their acquired skills to work multistep algebra challenge problems, and are examining strategies to solve these problems using a peer teaching model.

**Can you use all four numbers to make 24?**



The fog comes  
on little cat feet.

It sits looking  
over harbor and city  
on silent haunches  
and then moves on.

[Carl Sandburg](#)



*Based on a lesson from William and Mary curriculum, Jacob's Ladder, third grade ALPHA students wrote poems about an occurrence in nature in the form of Carl Sandburg's poem, Fog.*

## 3rd Grade ALPHA Reading

The students at Adrian, Rowland, and Sunview continue to be a part of a blogging community using Kidblog, a private, secure site where teachers and students can share writing. They have read, analyzed, and evaluated more introductory Junior Great Books stories via blog discussions and are using their analysis skills to form opinions based on reasoning and evidence from the authors' writings.

In addition to working with these stories and the Shared Inquiry Method, the students have worked with Carl Sandburg's poem,

"Fog", creating individual interpretive blog illustrations using the Paint program, commenting on each other's artwork and written analyses of their interpretations. Students then created their own poems in the style of Carl Sandburg, relating their choice of natural element and an animal that would act as the metaphor to their natural element.

## 3rd Grade ALPHA Math

The ALPHA math third graders have been using higher level thinking strategies of analysis and evaluation, combined with multi-step and multi-operational math strategies, to play the 24 Game. They then continued on to the "Create" level of Bloom's Taxonomy to make original 24 cards for all of their ALPHA math peers districtwide. It was so much fun for the students to make, share, and solve all of these challenging, strategic math problems! We have also begun working on pre-algebra multi-stepped word problems and various strategies involved as an introduction to a future hands-on algebra unit.



Concentrating on solving a 24 card.





Junior High School students enjoy the “Art of Inventing” with the Lego Robotics Challenge.

## Coordinator’s Corner

Happy New Year! I hope that you had a nice holiday break—that you had time to spend with your family and friends. I hope that 2016 will be a good year for you and your family.

To help make this a productive year for your student, I would like to offer a few suggestions for helping your child feel more successful. Many parents assume success at a particular skill is pretty much determined by natural ability—but often the “edge” comes from mental attitude, character and strategy. Taken from a variety of resources, here are some simple ways for parents to help their children develop these traits.

1. **Find something to praise** A child who feels good about himself succeeds. Nurturing self-esteem is the central element of inspiring a child to peak.
2. **Teach, don’t blame** Criticize the behavior, not the child. Follow every, “That’s wrong!” by explaining what’s right.
3. **Assess your child’s strengths** Too often parents try to mold their child into what we want them to like or be, rather than listening to their own opinions and self-assessments.
4. **Encourage self-applause** Talking positively to yourself about yourself reinforces self-image, which in turn improves performance. Better performance causes more self-praise, which elevates self-image, which triggers further improvement.
5. **Teach your child to relax** Knowing how to relax is key to peak performance. When you’re relaxed, your mind is clearer, and your body can function at its greatest efficiency.
6. **Concentrate—concentrate** Students can spend long amounts of time concentrating on video games. Encourage them to use this same skill on schoolwork, too.
7. **Rehearse—mentally** Before an exam, urge your child to study hard and then create a mental motion picture of the entire test, from the instant the class bell rings until students are told to lay down their pencils. After several such visualizations, the test itself will seem routine.
8. **Set steps to a goal** Have your child set a personal goal and plan steps to achieve the goal. Actually write this plan down and post the goals and steps for reaching the goal where your child can see it.

Parents cannot goad their children to success with bribes, guilt or fear. There are no shortcuts to helping your child succeed. It is a gradual process of support, encouragement and hard work. But these efforts can pay off in peak performance and closer relationships between parents and child.

May both you and your child have a successful new year!

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SEL Gifted Coordinator

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