From the Principal’s Desk

As we reflect on 2020-2021, we do so through a lens of positivity and acknowledge the opportunities the past year provided us. We had an opportunity to be closer to our families and spend more time with them. We had an opportunity to become better at technology. We had an opportunity to re-examine our mental health, safety, and to prioritize what was important and what might not be. We made the best of this challenge in our lives and became better people.

It was a tougher and different year than most, but it was a year that we will remember and that we will grow from. This year our staff continued to focus on Project Based Learning (PBL) which consists of the following seven elements: a challenging problem, sustained inquiry, authenticity, student voice and choice, reflection, critique and revision, and a public product.

Enjoy this Annual Report, and as you remember the challenges we had this school year, try to think how it changed us and helped us to be better people.

Thank You, Principal Stewart
6th Grade COVID-19 Sayings T-Shirts

Sixth grade students in Mrs. Potts' Honors English class designed a COVID-19 Sayings t-shirt to raise money for Harmony's Parent Teacher Association. Students brainstormed COVID sayings and then agreed on which ones to feature on the t-shirt. The t-shirts were a big hit and raised over $200 for the PTA. At a time when the PTA hasn't been able to do much fundraising, having students contribute to the financial well-being of their school is much appreciated.

Science 6 Focused on PBL

Science 6 began their journey by learning about Space and Energy Resources. They conducted a PBL investigation where they made Planet Travel Brochures. Next, they moved onto properties of water and the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, where they explored authentic experiences in the watershed.

They moved on to atmosphere, weather, and matter. Along the way, using the scientific method to conduct "real world" experiments and labs, they used the PBL approach to learning in every aspect of the classroom this year.
PBL Experiences

History 6: Exploration, Revolutionary War and Westward Expansion

6th grade history students have been involved in all of the PBL elements throughout the school year. In the Exploration unit, students dug into the actions of a variety of explorers to determine whether we should “be like or don’t be like” that explorer. They researched and analyzed primary source documents, then made their own judgments.

For the Revolutionary War, the focus was on storytelling. Students chose what topic would most interest them, they engaged in sustained inquiry, and then wrote scripts for presenting to their classes. They had a special day for storytelling and sharing their fabulous hand-made items that went along with the research topics. Students also persuaded others to be Loyalists or Patriots.

Would you want to move west in the 1800’s? The 6th grade students created some very convincing final products centered on whether Americans should go west or stay in the east. They wrote as if they had already journeyed to the west themselves.

7th Graders Benefitted From PBL in Science

Students were able to participate in digital versions of some favorite laboratory activities and PBL experiences. These included an Ecological Make a Wish, a Cellular Organelle election, Build a Bunny, Genetics with a Smile, Design a Bird along with a student favorite: Frog dissections (in person and virtual. Even though this year has been a challenge for all students, many of them have put forth the effort needed to successfully navigate the new information and obstacles in their paths, developing skills they will be using in the future.
7th Grade US History Adapted to Distance Learning Model

While this year was quite different, there were many successes. The class covered events from Reconstruction to Civil Rights. The Roaring 20s, the World Wars and the Cold War were especially of interest. Assessments were all project based instead of tests. Those projects included researching family histories to tell our immigration stories and how they helped shape the United States, and creating Google Doodles to show how technological and cultural events shaped people's lives during different time periods.

Students showed their flexibility and ability to adapt to a variety of schedules this year and a great number of students have demonstrated an increased level of self-advocacy to be successful. Students were also given voice an choice over their learning by choosing their final products to work on.

Eighth Grade Physical Science Classes Made the Most of a Challenging Situation

This year students did many PBL projects including creating their own element, a Bonding Data Project and Rube Goldberg Machines. Several students did a remarkable job on the latter because students working from home had access to a wide variety of resources and they included their family members in this project. They covered acids and bases, the atom and Periodic Table, physical and chemical properties and changes, chemical bonding, chemical reactions, simple machines, speed, power, work, electricity, magnetism and Newton's Laws. The Pandemic had a huge impact on this class because typically labs would be done on a regular basis. However, there were still labs, but they were mostly done virtually or as demos.
PBL Help

French Students Learn About Culture

French classes spent the year building and growing their language skills in various contexts. French I started with the ABCs and 123s and by Quarter Four were planning the opening of their own cafés with menus, dialogues, and recipe books. Throughout French II, students wore several hats. They were event planners, fashion designers, historians, travel agents, and more as we moved through the year. Cultural lessons focused on France and the greater French-speaking world, including parts of Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Between Black History Month, Women's History Month, and Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month, students learned about a diverse group of French speakers. French music of all kinds was played in each class all year long. Even when they couldn't physically be together, French students made strong connections with each other and worked hard to make class fun and exciting.

Pre-Algebra Students Incorporated a Variety of Technology

Jamboards, Google slides, Desmos, and Nearpod are tools that assisted in instruction this year because they allow students to see work in real time and for teachers to also give feedback in real time.

For example, students worked in breakout rooms to complete a quarter of a picture using Jamboards. When each student completed their part of the picture, they took a screenshot and inserted it in a Google slide to create a giant snowflake. This focused on plotting points in the coordinate plane. Students also had various opportunities to demonstrate their understanding of topics learned throughout the year by finding objects in their surroundings and creating a Google slide to demonstrate things like slopes and angle relationships.
Pre-Algebra students in Mrs. Pizana’s class experienced what it would be like to buy an actual home in Western Loudoun. They investigated home listings, and learned about property prices, property location and current mortgage interest rates for a certain period of time. They were given an opportunity to investigate and work on financial planning.

**Buying a House in Loudoun County Isn't Easy**

8th Graders Participated in National Novel Writing Month Challenge

In English 8, students brainstormed and created a story idea of their choice for NANOWRIMO, and then worked on adding to their word counts over the month of November. After revision in December, students picked up a celebration bag, which included hot chocolate, coasters they could decorate, and a completion pin from the program. Before winter break, we made hot chocolate, put our favorite story quotes on the coasters, and virtually celebrated the hard work of being creative and pursuing our goals. This marks Harmony's sixth year of participating in this national program!
A Global Pandemic Can't Slow Down Spectrum!

For sixth and seventh grade Spectrum, the year began with a study of various cultures. Students applied the 10-culture universal test to a culture of their choice and presented their findings in our annual Wonders of The World Night presentation.

Sixth and seventh grade students then applied creative thinking skills along with anthropology and archeology concepts to create a culture for presentation in our library “Museum." Students created an artifact from each of the culture universals, a newspaper written in the language of their people and a crypt for display before parents and peers.

Eighth grade Spectrum students created animated films, which were used as PSAs concerning A World of 7 Billion, and the long-term effects of an ever increasing population on our world. These films were presented to their peers through our Spectrum Film Festival and entered in the World of 7 Billion video contest.

Spectrum students also experienced voice and choice with our Refugee Refuge design project focusing on home designs for various refugee populations to be evaluated by a local building company, Panalwrights. This design project allows students to experience other cultures through architectural design. The winning house plan creator will receive a professional architectural rendering of their design idea.
Students in Mr. Weitlich’s and Mr. Hendricks' Tech Ed classes had the opportunity to participate in a variety of engineering and design challenges. First semester students learned foundational skills in the areas of technical drawing, computer-aided design, 3D printing, structural design, and participated in a variety of engineering and design challenges. During the second semester, thanks to school-based funding, Mr. Hendricks and Mr. Weitlich were able to assemble over 200 project supply bags! Each bag was filled with a variety of materials that allows all second semester students to participate in engaging hands-on projects related to electricity, hydraulics, structural engineering, and more! During the second semester, Tech Ed 8 students designed an Ankle & Foot Orthotics brace, and conducted Reverse Engineering of a mechanical device (such as a flashlight).

Students in Mr. Weitlich's eighth grade Technology of Robotic Design class had the opportunity to program virtual robots using the VEX Virtual Robot platform. Students learned foundational Python programming skills, computer-aided design, and rapid prototyping, all while participating in virtual robotics challenges and competitions. Throughout the year, Harmony worked with River Bend Middle School and the Loudoun Education Foundation to secure funding for over 100 educational robots that were distributed to all distance learning students. These robots provided 100% of Harmony's robotics students with essential "hands-on" activities that put their previously learned skills into action!
PBL Experiences

Art Classes Focused on the Individual to the Community

This year's Art Classes focused on three major PBL Projects: Self Portrait Postcards, Random Blocks of Kindness and Recipe Cards for the Empty Bowl Project. The Self Portrait Postcards answered the question, "How will I create a portrait that documents this time in history?" Each student created a self-portrait postcard during distance learning, which they mailed back to school. These portraits are on display throughout Harmony Middle School.

Un fortunately, COVID prevented the Empty Bowls event this year. Instead, eighth grade art students created illustrations focusing on World Hunger awareness in collaboration with eighth grade FACS students, who researched and refined soup recipes. Sets of recipe cards were sold and proceeds donated to the Western Loudoun Food Pantry. This project answered the question, "How can art make a statement and help a community?"

Music Was All Around

Bands in all three grades participated in virtual winter and spring concerts. Students submitted individual recordings that were combined together into full band performances. Similarly, the Chorus also performed a virtual Winter Concert that brought joy to the holidays.

Students also created images of kindness on blocks of wood with help from our business partner, Loudoun Lumber. This project is part of the LCPS: Community Connections Program. Students either gave their blocks away, or left randomly for someone to find. This project answered the question, "how can your art impact others?"
Drama Club

Every 3rd and 4th Thursday of each month, students got together to create a scene from the Disney Classic, "The Little Mermaid." Students sang, danced, created costumes, and had hair and makeup training. This culminated in a three-minute performance!

Mad Science Club

The Mad Science Club held two sessions this Spring. Students were able to participate in some wild and wacky science experiments. Students launched solar balloons, created fireworks, made dry ice boo bubbles and ice cream, designed chemical reactions and of course ate s'mores.

Student Council Association

The SCA started when the Hybrid students came back, electing eighth grader Lillian Hackett as President and seventh grader Nathan Nocon as Vice President. The first project was promoting Spirit Friday. Daniel Biondo, Communications Officer and a seventh grader, created the great posters.

The SCA also developed a "Thank You Teachers" video and Padlet for the Distance Learning students based on students' writings on posters placed around the building. Lastly, they raised funds for the Loudoun Food Pantry by selling Harmony Hornet masks and collecting non-perishable food items. Our students learned about Robert's Rules of Order quickly and became a cohesive community-improving machine!

Library Student Advisory Committee (LIAM - our Library Is Awesome and Marvelous!)

LIAM advised on library programs, activities, and incentives. This year they provided book reviews, directed the upcoming Summer Reading Program, and established the first Virtual Book Club for the Virginia Readers' Choice 2020-2021 books. There was a Google Meet during lunch on Mondays to plan for upcoming events as well as a Group Page in Schoology to discuss ideas.
Accolades and Awards

Foxcroft STEM Challenge

The Harmony Lady Hornets competed at the annual Foxcroft STEM Challenge! The 10th annual Challenge was held virtually this year and was a great success! Harmony was joined by 48 middle schoolers from 21 schools and 36 high schoolers from 13 schools across the country and the globe!

Girls worked in teams to tackle four challenge problems, led by engineers from sponsor, Stryker. They used their math, science, coding, and of course teamwork skills to work collaboratively through the problems. There were also 43 middle schoolers and 38 high schoolers who completed the daily trivia challenge, with 36 students answering trivia on all five days!

Congratulations to Lillian Hackett who was part of the team that came in first place.

Orchestra Recognitions

This year, the District XVI Fall Solo Festival was held and seventh grader Emma Edwards received a Superior rating for her Cello Solo. Eighth grader Sophia Zentner also received a Superior rating for her Violin Solo.

For the District XVI Spring Solo Festival, Emma Edwards, received another Superior rating for her Cello Solo, and Sophia Zentner received another Superior rating for her Violin Solo.

Band Recognitions

Eighth grader Adrian Richard, and seventh grader Nathan Nocon, participated in the LCPS Fall Solo Festival. Both received Superior ratings for their individual performances.

Seventh grader Henry Campbell auditioned for All-District Band and received the second highest score on Flute among all middle school Flute students in LCPS! He was selected for the District Band as second chair flute.

Eighth grader Zack Hafner auditioned for All-District Jazz Ensemble and received the highest score on Alto Saxophone among all middle school saxophone students in LCPS! He was selected for District Jazz Ensemble as first chair alto saxophone.

Seventh grader Emilie Boudreaux, Zack Hafner, Nathan Nocon, and Adrian Richard participated in the District 16 Spring Solo Festival. All received Superior ratings for their individual performances.
Accolades and Awards

Spectrum Awards

An ongoing goal for Spectrum students is to compete in academic competitions. To that end, Harmony sixth, seventh and eighth grade Spectrum students competed in the Continental Mathematics League. The following students placed in the competition:

Sixth Grade:
1st Place: David Debreczy and Alexander Della Torre
2nd Place: Jason Zhang

Seventh Grade:
1st Place: Nathan Nocon
2nd Place: Sophie Brzozowsky

Eighth Grade:
1st Place: Marie Goode
2nd Place: Jaden Park

In addition, in the World of 7 Billion Video Contest, eighth Grade Spectrum came in first place for their video, "Barren Waters" and second place for their "7 Billion Above" video.

Spelling Bee

Sixth grader, Angel Bhatti, won the Spelling Bee this year at Harmony. Congratulations, Angel!

Faculty Recognitions

Sixth grade Science teacher Greg Caccavo was nominated for the Washington Post's Teacher of the Year Award.

Sixth grade History teacher Melissa Espinoza was nominated for the Gilder-Lehrman History Teacher of the Year Award.

Equity Initiatives at Harmony

The two appointed Ambassadors to the new LCPS Equity Ambassador Program are sixth grader Genesis Herrera Sura and seventh grader Sahr Nyandemoh. They met monthly with ambassadors from other schools and the Equity Supervisor for LCPS. They serve as change makers by sharing their experiences as LCPS students to make positive changes towards more equitable practices within LCPS.

The HMS Equity Committee met monthly to discuss and participate in professional development. This multi-disciplinary team discussed current events, videos, and articles. Next year they will review school practices and data and combine forces with our PBIS team to continue our growth in being an equitable school environment.