Park Elementary News

ISD 423

Celebrating lifelong learning and building a school community that encourages learning, respect and communication.

March 31, 2021

Contact Information

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Email

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Assistant Principal
Email

Building Nurse
320-234-2734

School Website
www.isd423.org

Hutchinson Bus Lines
320-234-0888

Important Dates

April 2—No School, Good Friday

April 7—2 Hour Late Start

May 5—2 Hour Late Start

**May 31**—No School, Memorial Day

**June 2**—Last Student Day

@parkelem

MCAs

Measuring Students' Progress

Online MCA Assessments will be taken this late April and early May by students in grades three through five. These statewide tests are designed to help measure student progress in reading and math. Fifth grade students will also complete a science assessment during this time. For specific dates and times, please refer to your child's teacher. Please do everything possible to ensure that your student(s) are present during their classroom's testing days. Thank you for your cooperation!
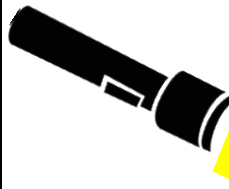
Mrs. Withers' students had a read-in and some *flashlight fun* once they reached the end of their Book Club book!
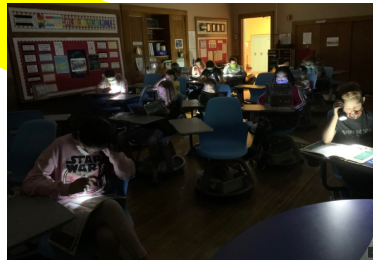
Click Here to view the Monthly Menu

Hometown History

Brian Haines, Director of the McLeod County Historical Society and Museum, shared a presentation with the 4th graders about the rich Native American history here in Hutchinson, including Little Crow. Here's a picture of Mrs. Thode's class watching Brian's video.

McLeod County Historical SOCIETY & MUSEUM
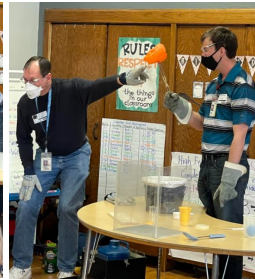Contact Us
Preserving the past, inspiring the future
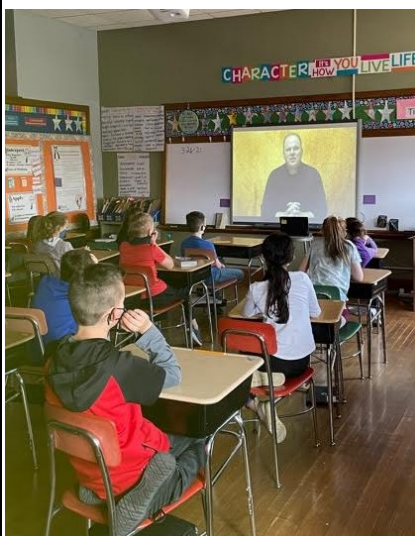
From Around the Building

Cryogenics

3M Engineering Week

Thank you, 3M staff, for teaching the
2nd Graders about Cryogenics!

MASK UP
with Tiger Pride!

Clothing Donations Needed

The Health Office is in need of clothing donations again. We are looking for:

- Girls/boys pants. Sizes 5-14, NO jeans.

- New/unused/still in the package boys and girls underwear. Sizes XS-XL

- At this time we do not need shirts.

Students have been enjoying the Mask Up Challenge! We are still drawing names weekly for a chance to decorate a mask with Mrs. Getzke.

Presenting....Mrs. Bussler's Third Grade Math Choir! Check out their multiplication songs!

0:00 / 1:07

Click here for the video.
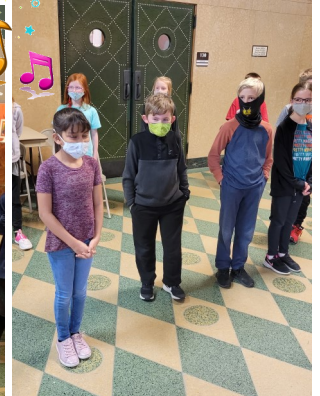
First Lego League Challenge Season

2020-2021

This was written by TigerBots Participants: *Matson Alvey (6), Brooklyn Irvin (4), Zac Padrnos (5), Malea Rude (5), Owen Scott (5), Andrew Stiras (5) Brezlin Theget (4), Charlie Wacek (6)*

This year, our theme was RePLAY. The game board has different models representing how people can be more active. Our Innovation Project challenge was to get people to be more active.

The Innovation Project challenge was to figure out a problem relating to why people aren't active enough and invent a solution to get people to RePLAY or be active in a different way. We did lots of research and figured out that people are not active for many reasons including: it can hurt them, or they don't have the time, space, or ideas to be active. Many people have a negative mindset about being active. We mainly focused on the negative mindset piece. We wanted to invent a way to be active that was fun, quick, easy, interesting, positive, and distracting from negative thinking.

Our solution is the Tiger Tails. It is a sound creating machine operated by pulling ropes. It gets people active by making them pull ropes to create sound and they would need to walk between ropes to play multiple notes. It was inspired by combining a xylophone with change ringing.

We went through lots of iterations (improvements) as we worked through our design process. Our first design was a giant xylophone mounted to a wall. We decided that the resonating chambers would need to be HUGE and wood would probably not last as long outside as metal. Our second design was that we changed the wooden bars to metal tubes and you pull a rope to make a mallet hit the tube. Our final design redirected the force of the mallet by using a fulcrum to change the direction and a spring to reset the mallet in striking position.

For the Robot Performance Game, we began by looking at each of the game missions and rating them by difficulty, points available, ease of combining missions, and how fun it would be to program. Then we used the "Mission Selection Work-sheet" ranked list to help us prioritize the order of missions to work on. These missions helped us to decide how to build our robot and attachments.

During Distance Learning we used pseudocode to plan out our robot missions on paper. We would draw on a map where we wanted the robot to go and then write out in words the steps we needed to program the robot to take. Once we were able to meet in person again our pseudocode made it easier to get started programming our missions. At the end of each practice we took pictures and wrote about what robot building, programming, or changes we made in a shared online document. We call this our Engineering Notebook. Tournament judges love to learn about our process and progress by looking through this notebook.

Before the tournament, we recorded our project presentation and robot missions and sent the videos to all of the classes at Park Elementary. They gave us positive feedback on our Tiger Tails solution.

We were one of 115 teams in Minnesota who competed in the virtual Regional Tournaments. Our highest score for our robot run was 255 points. We won an Innovative Project award. And we advanced to the State Championship.

We then spent time between the tournaments making improvements to our presentation to provide more information and we added more robot missions.

After our Regional Tournament was the State Championship on March 20th. Only 40 teams in all of Minnesota were able to attend the virtual tournament. For the robot game, we added a mission called Treadmill and we improved our robot game score from 255 to 300. For our project, we did more research and added more information to our presentation. We also attempted to contact more experts.

Our coaches are Mr. Durheim from Park Elementary and Larry Stiras who is an engineer at 3M.

Specialist Spotlight
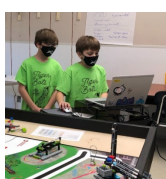
Tech Time

Tech Time

Mr. Durheim

During the school day before writing this article, I listened to the students in my classroom throughout the day and smiled behind my mask as I heard comments such as, "I don't know how to do this," "This is so hard," "I've tried it so many times," and various grunts and exasperated sighs. Rarely did a hand go up and no one stopped working or closed their Chromebook. I moved throughout the classroom as a reminder that I'm available to help and offered assistance many times, but there weren't many students wanting help. You may be wondering *what was challenging for students, yet they were persistent and wanted to figure it out. Read on!*

Families who have had students at Park Elementary over the past several years have seen a gradual transformation of the TechTime program. The focus has moved from learning to use individual computer applications to coding. Why the change? There are many reasons for this transition, but the greatest of those is all of the skills we learn through coding.

Coding *isn't computer programming.* Computer programmers use code (computer languages) to create software. They use coding knowledge and skills to create programs which control computer functions and operations. The focus of coding in education, on the other hand, is not to create a finished product, but rather the learning that happens through coding activities. The graphic to the right identifies many of these skills.
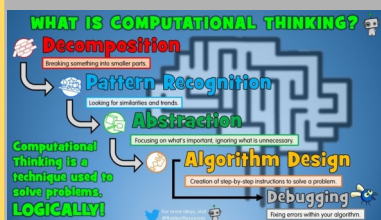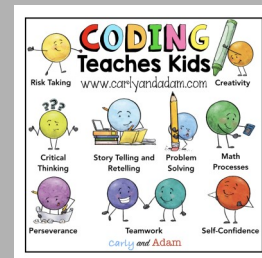
We refer to the specific thinking processes used in coding as Computational Thinking. It's all about thinking logically to solve problems. The graphic to the left shows the four main elements of Computational Thinking. As you look at these, you will see that these are logical problem solving skills that can be used in all areas of life. This is why coding has become an important part of education--it is a way to work on thinking and problem solving skills in a fun and creative way. Students can then apply these thinking and problem solving skills elsewhere.

Second graders have spent much of TechTime working on the Computational Thinking skills. They have played games which required them to sort items, eliminate items that didn't fit, figure out the correct sequence, or find mistakes. Students are currently solving coding puzzles using block coding with Code.org and will explore other forms of block coding for the remainder of the third trimester.
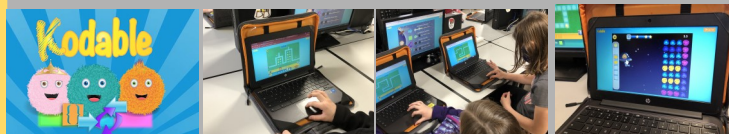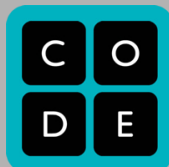
Third graders have also practiced individual Computational Thinking skills. They have applied these skills to solving coding puzzles in Code.org and are currently challenging themselves in Kodable--a website in which you help fuzz balls navigate a strange planet.

Students have been learning coding skills including sequence, conditions, loops, and functions. We will soon move on to more block coding using the Blockly platform.

Fourth and Fifth graders have also put their thinking skills to use on Code.org. These students are currently working in Scratch, a block coding language created by students at MIT. This is a big and exciting transition for these students because it means they are no longer trying to solve puzzles or navigate through mazes. Instead, they are **creating** their own code. Scratch opens up a whole new side of coding in which students imagine and use thinking and problem solving skills to make the onscreen world do what they want it to do, not what the program is asking them to do. This is exciting and sometimes overwhelming when students are used to being told exactly what to do.

To answer the question from the introductory paragraph above, *yes, it is the power of CODING--problem solving, that kept these students engaged in learning. I encourage you to ask your student to login to their coding accounts and give you a demonstration. You'll be amazed by the thinking and learning going on!*

- Mr. Durheim

Check out our Positivity Door!

What type of affirmation would you share on the door?