

Garden City Public Schools
56 Cathedral Avenue
Garden City, NY 11530

Coordinator of Public Information
Catherine Knight, Ed. D.
516 478-1079

December 11, 2017

For Immediate Release:

Augmented Reality in the Classroom – Is it Real?

“Whoa! Look at this!” and “Cooooool!” were common refrains, along with copious giggles and gasps, as elementary students at Stewart and Stratford excitedly moved around their classrooms exploring a new pilot - Google’s Expedition AR (Augmented Reality) Pioneer Program. Garden City was selected as one of the districts in which to premiere the new app in order to gather feedback from students and teachers before Google fully launches the product in the next year or two.

Led by GCHS alum Mark Beisner (Class of 2013), students in Stewart and Stratford learned about “AR” using smart phones set up with a host of phantom images from dinosaurs and volcanos to underwater plants and fish. What the students saw on their screens were complete, full color 3D images they could walk around to view from any angle.

Before the students were provided this new technology, teachers were instructed in early morning staff development sessions to prepare them to lead the AR sessions. Google’s pilot app offers 20 “Expedition” lessons including the Circulatory System, Fish, WWII, DNA, the Moon, Dinosaurs, the Ocean Floor, and more. The images, be it a T-Rex or a saltwater eel, depending on the lesson selected by their teacher, appear randomly around the classroom as if suspended in the air or on a table or floor.

“Instead of taking you to a whole new reality like VR (Virtual Reality), AR adds to your reality,” explained Mr. Beisner. “The images appear in 3D, so students can go over, under, and around to see the appropriate view to their orientation. The teacher controls what images students see on a controlling device.” Teachers are also provided with lesson information that appears directly on their device, including animal descriptions and guiding questions.

Students were eager to share their insights with Mr. Beisner after the session: “It really felt like you were under the ocean and in the classroom at the same time,” said one impressed Stratford fourth grader. “I think there could be images that moved,” explained another. “What if you could see inside the animal?” added another, building on classmates’ comments. All great ideas that Google’s developers will now take into consideration as they hone the “Expeditions” app.

Many thanks to Mark Beisner and Google for introducing this new technology to our teachers and students. For more information, visit: <https://edu.google.com/expeditions/ar/#about>.



Caption for 11-17-17IMG_5327STEMarkGoogle.jpg:
GCHS Class of 2013 alum Mark Beisner instructs students at Stewart School on the use of Google's pilot app.



Caption for 11-16-17IMG_4984SALavalleGoogleARGirls.jpg:
The fourth graders' reaction to the Augmented Reality app in action was hysterical!



Caption for 11-16-17IMG_4986SALavalle Group.jpg:

After “orienting” their phones by walking around the classroom, students worked in small groups with smart phones on “selfie” sticks to discover the AR images during a session at Stratford.



Caption for 11-16-17IMG_5000SALavalleARBoyGirl.jpg:

No doubt about it, the new technology was captivating!



Caption for 11-17-17IMG_5317STEBoyAR.jpg:
This Stewart student was exploring a dinosaur he found.



Caption for 11-16-17IMG_5002SALavalleARFloor.jpg:
These students explored beneath a large fish they discovered during their AR session.



Caption for 11--16-17IMG_509SALavalleARGirlFish.jpg:

Is it there or not? This Stratford student attempted to hold a saltwater eel during her group's AR session while her friend held the device.