



EAST AURORA

SCHOOL DISTRICT 131

The Nostalgia Project: Discovering Community Through Poetry, History, and Human Impact

Session Agenda

- Overview
- Project Goals
- Q1-4 Projects
- The Podcast:
Putting It All Together
- Outcomes
- Resources





**What grade
do you teach?**

**What were you like
at that age?**

Nostalgia:

a sentimental longing or wistful affection for the past, typically for a period or place with happy personal associations

Overview

- Our district partnered with Dr. Badia Ahad, Loyola University Provost, to train staff district-wide on the concept of Nostalgia.
- Students were feeling much anxiety about returning to school after the pandemic, and the idea of reminding students what they loved about school helped them want to learn again.
- Nostalgia reclamation, restoration, and retribution makes students feel invested in their community which creates a sense of ownership and responsibility to be agents of change.

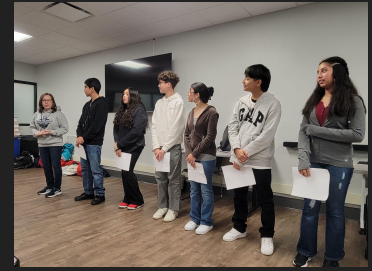


Project Goals

- Each content area would be included
- Project would align with our curriculum and be authentic
- Students would produce 1 project per content area
 - ELA - *Where I'm From* Poem
 - Social Studies - Past Aurora
 - Algebra - Aurora Data Scatterplot
 - Science - Human Impact Project
- Podcasts were created about each project



Quarter 1: My Aurora



- This project relates to the first quarter curriculum for 8th grade language arts. Our first unit, *Rites of Passage*, addresses community connection, narrative analysis, and poetry analysis.
- The essential questions for this unit are “How do an author’s surroundings affect their writing?” and “How can my literacy affect my connection to my community?” Students reflect on their surroundings and where they have come from.
- Their culminating project includes a poem modeled after George Ella Lyon’s poem *Where I’m From* that demonstrates their connection to their community and in doing so, they connect to their sense of nostalgia.

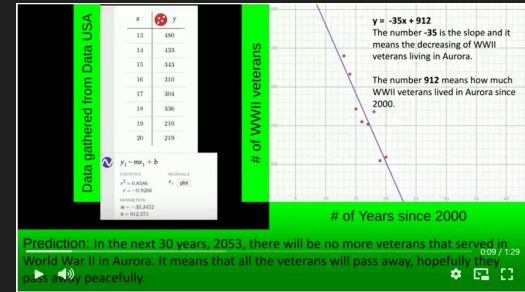
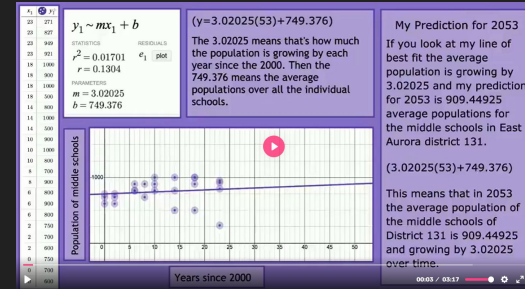
Quarter 2: Past Aurora

- This project connects with our study of growth of industry and cities during the Gilded Age. This part of the project is kicked off with a walking history tour of our city.
- Students explore the contributions of different ethnic groups that contributed to the past and current growth of the City of Aurora.
- Students use first and secondary sources to create a student-led inquiry on a specific place (churches, schools, parks, historical buildings, etc.) and evaluate sources to explain the historical and cultural significance in order to better understand how historians tell stories.



Quarter 3: Their Aurora

- This project connects to the data and statistics that are covered in our Algebra standards or 8th grade math standards.
- Students look at charts of data, read maps, and compile information about demographics of the area they are investigating
- Students then create their own data representation - we have been using scatterplots and lines of best fit to graph the data and interpret how the data will change over the next 30 years.



Quarter 4: Our Aurora

The focus of the project is for students to take a stand about an issue in their community and to propose a way to resolve it in a way that would benefit the community as a whole. The research and proposals connect to the Science Human Impact Unit.

Improving the Infrastructure of Aurora.



Picture of a pothole that isn't patched very well.



Our streets should look more like this. With a bike lane and sidewalks.

Problem: The problem of terrible infrastructure is that it not only looks terrible and gives our city a bad look, but it's also a reason why there is car crashes. In addition, it also causes injury when there isn't safe walking spaces for pedestrians and safe biking lanes for pedal cyclists.

Solution: As a community, we could contact our city to not only fix our roads, create biking lanes, and better sidewalks, but to make some of them out of recycled plastic which will help to reduce the number of polluted plastic.

CORRECTION TO CROSSWALK LIGHTS



Photograph of New York Street and South Lincoln Avenue crosswalk light

I am investigating how slow crosswalk lights, or even no crosswalk lights at all, discourage students from walking.

December of 2023, Aurora launched a policy called the Complete Street Policy which basically is a street that is designed to be accessible for all users. According to the City of Aurora's definition of a complete street, a complete street must be accessible to "users of all ages, ability, income, race, or ethnicity are able to safely and conveniently move upon, along and across a street."

To advocate for this issue is talking to the city council and mayor about updating the signal timing to be more current and pedestrian friendly. The city could fund the inspection and addition of crosswalk timers. We can establish an organization that is dedicated to making Aurora streets more pedestrian friendly.

In my neighborhood the issue on New York St and Lincoln Ave, on Gaena Blvd and Lincoln Ave, and on Root St and New York St, when students are out of school the roads are really busy and even busier after clubs, when kids are out of club at PMPA rush hour starts meaning the crazy roads are even more dangerous.

Potential impacts of this issue if left alone or ignored could result in a potential car crash caused by cars confused about a child's direction or worse, a child gets hit by a car.

This issue could lead to more people driving home instead of walking because they don't feel safe crossing the street. The thing is, when more kids drive by car, more car exhaust will pollute the area due to the CO2 and nitrogen dioxide.

NCTE Digital Media Literacy Statement



“All learners at all grade levels have the right to:

1. explore questions of representation and power through critical reading, listening, and viewing;
2. use their empowered voices through writing, speaking, and self expression in multiple genres and formats;
3. make relevant connections between school and society through the use of digital media and popular culture.”



Putting It All Together

- [Padlet 2022-2023](#)
- [Padlet 2023-2024](#)
- Recordings were done via Flip. Now we use STREAM.
- Students uploaded their videos to Padlet.
- Podcast Examples: [ELA](#), [Social Studies](#), [Algebra](#), [Science](#)

Aurora Podcasts 2023-24

These podcasts about Aurora, IL were done by 8th grade students at Fred Rodgers Magnet Academy.

ELA - My Aurora -
Where I'm From
Poem Podcast

Social Studies -
Past Aurora -
Podcasts about a
Historical Building

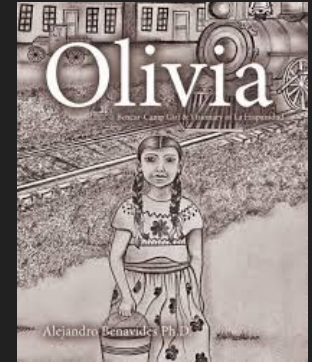
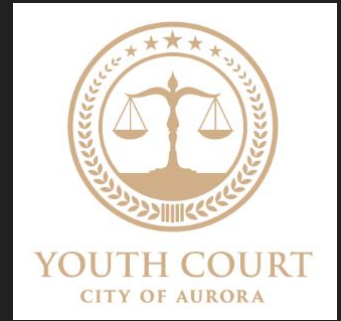
Algebra - Their
Aurora - Podcast
about Aurora Data

Science - Our
Aurora - Podcasts
about Human
Impact in Aurora

Outcomes

What STUDENTS learned:

- The benefit of collaborating with community stakeholders
- Their voices are valued in their community
- Empowered to make a positive change



Outcomes

What TEACHERS learned:

- Students became more involved in their community.
- Teachers became more inclusive in their classrooms and in the community they teach. We learn, too!

(ISBE Inclusive Inquiry Based Social Studies Standards)



RESOURCES

D131 8th Grade Nostalgia Project

A rectangular graphic with a dark, textured background. The background features a close-up of a clock face with hands and some faint text like "REGISTRATION" and "SERIAL N.". Overlaid on this is the text "East Aurora Nostalgia Curriculum Projects" in a large, white, serif font.

East Aurora Nostalgia
Curriculum Projects

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