



Contributed photo

George Walton Academy sixth graders Allie Marler and Catherine Atkinson partner up to put the finishing touches on the design for their food truck.

Keep on (food) trucking

GWA | Students learn business with faux food trucks

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Every business owner's dream begins somewhere.

For George Walton Academy students it might just start with a taco.

The sixth grade students at the private school got a chance to learn entrepreneurial skills by creating their own mock food trucks in an inter-disciplinary unit dedicated to running a business.

Lori White, a sixth grade teacher at GWA, said the project was invaluable for the various facets it presented to the busy students.

"This project allowed the teachers and students to think outside the box," White said. "It

gave us all an opportunity to be creative and think big. None of us had created a project like this before, so it was risky and out of our comfort zone. We knew this would be a shift in learning style for the students, as well as, instruction style for the teachers, but it really paid off. I found the students learned much more than the academic aspects embedded in the project. They learned some very valuable life tools — critical thinking, collaboration, decision making, conflict resolution and problem solving."

The project involved skills from numerous academic disciplines. During the unit, each student utilized essential writing and math skills while collaborating with his or her business partner to produce a website and build a 3-D model of

the business.

Each team created a website which included descriptions of the business, as well as an interactive menu where their classmates could order. They used math skills to calculate the total for the orders and included the sales tax. Students also calculated the area and perimeter of their food trucks and for the equipment needed for the interior of the trucks.

The students got a bit of hands-on assistance with a visit from GWA parent Chris Collin, who owns The Strange Taco in Lawrenceville, and not only visited classes and shared his experience, but also brought tacos along for a unit playfully titled "Let's Taco 'bout starting a business."

The students said it was a great learning experience.

"When doing this



Contributed photo

JP Morgan and Kameron Atkins put their math skills to the test to design their food truck during GWA's business unit.

amazing project, our teachers told us to work until we are proud and then keep going! This really influenced everyone to do an amazing job on the project! This was the most fun I have had doing a project, and I can't wait for the rising sixth graders to experience it too," Catherine

Atkinson said.

Payton Stone agreed. "In this project I learned that there is a lot more to starting a business than I thought there would be. We had to go through a lot of stages to make our food truck business, but at the end seeing our finished taco truck was so cool," Pay-

ton said.

And while the food trucks they created aren't real — yet — the students said the process of creating them was one that would stick with them for some time.

"It was really cool watching our project really come to life," Allie Marler said.

Rita Dickinson

Monroe Country Day School

Three ways to help your child be more successful in school and in life

If we as educators are doing our job well, we are always looking for ways to make our students more successful. The New Year gives us a perfect opportunity to look back at our accomplishments and challenges and see what we have learned. At Monroe Country Day School we have been making lists of what we want to continue, eliminate and strengthen.

Often parents ask us for suggestions to help

their child be more successful in school. Monroe Country Day School teachers recommend these three goals for 2018 to help your child be more successful no matter where they are enrolled in school.

First, help your child to establish a sleep routine that assures he gets at least the required minimum sleep time for his age. For most school age children 6 years to 13 years — 9 to 11 hours are recommended. A 2016 study shows that five hours of sleep deprivation leads to a loss

of connectivity between neurons in the hippocampus, a region of the brain associated with learning and memory. Many of us as adults have gone to work after a sleepless night and found it difficult to focus and be productive. Imagine if you are a child trying to stay awake, focus and learn new material.

Secondly, encourage your child to eat healthy by limiting caffeine and sugary drinks, sugar packed foods and nutrient lacking snacks. Provide a variety of foods

from each of the five food groups: grains, vegetables, fruits, protein and dairy, in portions appropriate to the child's needs. An Oregon state 2015 study, published in the journal Neuroscience, found that a high-sugar diet was particularly detrimental to brain function, leading not only to decreased cognitive flexibility but also to impairments in short and long-term memory. Even some of the healthier lunches and snacks have hidden sugars. Healthy food

choices are essential to help children grow, develop, feel good and do well academically.

Thirdly, limit your child's screen time. The Academy of American Pediatrics' new guidelines, identifies screen time as time spent using digital media for entertainment purposes. Other uses of media, such as online homework, don't count as screen time. Too much entertainment screen time affects children's ability to concentrate, to pay attention, to sense other people's attitudes,

to communicate and to build a large vocabulary.

Unless parents plan to totally unplug and move off the grid it may a lofty goal to completely comply with all the recommended guidelines. However, any move we can make to improve our sleep, diet and screen time will make us all better prepared to learn and work in 2018.

Happy New Year from all of us at Monroe Country Day School!
Rita Dickinson is the founder and director of the Monroe Country Day School.

