

# ACADEMIC SPOTLIGHT

## *Mrs. Goldner's Fifth Grade*

"Engaging students is a goal of every teacher in their classroom and this year I have an amazing opportunity to learn from a master. I, along with our principal Pam Thomas and literacy coach Hilary Meulenberg, have joined the Ignite Engage Apprentice Cohort through the Kent ISD. This multi-year learning opportunity is centered around the work of Ellin Keene and her book *Engaging Children*. The cohort, which includes educators from all over Kent County, participates in three learning days with Ellin Keene and monthly after school meetings to collaborate and share. The most recent learning day took place at Kent City Elementary where Mrs. Keene taught a lesson in our 5th grade classroom while more than 10 educators observed. It was a powerful experience for all...students and educators alike! Ellin Keene shared a picture book on the Greensboro Sit-Ins in the 1960's. In addition to providing wonderful background knowledge which will help prepare my students for their Civil Rights research paper coming up, her reading and discussion with the students left them wanting to know more.

Wanting to know more, or Intellectual Urgency, is one of the four pillars of engagement that Ellin Keene has identified. My students have embraced this pillar and can recognize when they or a classmate are engaged with intellectual urgency. Recently we read a book which mentioned three types of carnivorous plants, so we took the time to look them up to see what they looked like and how they trap their prey. Another book mentioned genetic traits, which resulted in checking to see which student could roll their tongue, who had a widow's peak and if our earlobes were attached or not. Building on that intellectual urgency is one of the ways I am making my classroom more engaging for all my students."

- Mrs. Goldner



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