

Chicks Hatching Interest in Galvin's 6th Grade

Sixth grade science students at the Galvin Middle School have been so enchanted in the chicken eggs they incubated that many returned to the classroom on a recent sunny Saturday to watch them hatch. Galvin science teacher Elizabeth Doucette created this captivating project to help her students develop an understanding of biology through a direct, real-life experience. The Wakefield Educational Foundation was happy to award Ms. Doucette a \$496 grant to help bring her concept to the classroom.

The funds from WEF enabled the purchase of 7 fertile eggs and an incubator set, providing students with a highly engaging, hands-on learning experience through the modeling of hatching chicken eggs with the use of an electronic incubator. Ms. Doucette provided the insight and ingenuity to bring the project to life, which didn't stop with the chicks hatching. She also built her own brooder, and found another teacher with a large coop to take in the future chickens so that her students can keep tracking them. She even created and applied braces to help a chick with splayed eggs, fondly named "Flip-Flop" by her students.



Mid-hatching on a Saturday morning.

Ms. Doucette states, "Children have a natural sense of curiosity about living things in the world around them. Through this experience, I hope to build on this curiosity so that students can develop an understanding of biology through direct experience with living things, their life cycles, and their habitats. My hope is that I can provide our students with a truly authentic real-life science experience that they will never forget."

State standards were incorporated into the lessons. The study of chicken embryos was used to teach complex systems such as the circulatory system, and to reinforce more basic skills such as data



Freshly hatched chicks on a Saturday morning. Flip-Flop is on the right.

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measurement, collection, and analysis. The experience has helped students learn biological concepts and develop a deeper understanding of the life sciences.



6th-grade student with a nearly 2-week old chick



Galvin students engage with the nearly 2-week old chicks in their open pen

Ms. Doucette submitted a grant application through WEF's annual grant process. The Foundation continually encourages staff and PTO leaders to submit innovative enrichment projects for consideration.

To support the grant process, WEF conducts a series of fundraisers annually, such as: WEF's Wakefield Public Schools Calendar, showcasing student art; the S.T.A.R.S. program, recognizing exemplary WPS staff; Chocolate Roses; and the Adult Spelling Bee. In addition, WEF welcomes individual, business and community donations. WEF is awarding staff and PTO leaders just over \$30,000 for the 2018-2019 school-year and has awarded over \$350,000 to schools across the Wakefield Public Schools district since 1989. Learn more by following WEF on Twitter or Facebook, or go to www.WEF01880.org.

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Ms. Doucette and 6th-grade students with the giant WEF check.