



**CAPITOL
HILL
DAY
SCHOOL**

**GRAY MATTERS (Nov2016)
By Jason Gray, Head of School**

Making Our Learning Visible

Over the past few years, Capitol Hill Day School faculty has engaged with ideas broadly developed by Project Zero. Project Zero was founded in 1967 as an arm of the Harvard University School of Education with a vision to study and improve education in the arts. While Project Zero has maintained a strong commitment to research in arts education, it has expanded to include investigations into the nature of intelligence, understanding, thinking, creativity, cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural thinking, and ethics. The congruence with the Capitol Hill Day School mission and philosophy is clear.

Most notably, our interaction with Project Zero work has come through two experiences:

- This past summer our Educational Leadership Team participated in the Washington International School Summer Institute for Teachers (WISSIT): Connecting DC Educators with Project Zero Ideas. Together with public, public charter, and independent school educators from across the region, we spent a week engaged in deep discussion about effective teaching and ways to strengthen our school-wide culture of professional reflection and collaboration.
- Last spring, our full faculty joined our peer Capitol Area Progressive Schools (CAPS) in hosting Steve Seidel at our biennial CAPS symposium. As a professor at Harvard, Seidel is directly involved in Project Zero, where he is the principal researcher on projects that study the use of reflective practices in schools, the close examination of student work, and documentation of learning. At the symposium, using Seidel's guidance, teachers explored the idea of "making learning visible" through documentation to enhance student, teacher, parent, and community learning and understanding.

The display and documentation of student work is not new at Capitol Hill Day School. In fact, our work with Project Zero has served to strengthen existing practice and has encouraged us to be more intentional in seeing documentation as “an act of communication,” a way for us to “make public a conversation about what we value.” A large part of making learning visible is sharing work with an authentic audience. As parents in our community you are, fundamentally, one of our most authentic audiences. We encourage you to engage in the “conversation” with us.

We hope you will take time to examine the many bulletin boards throughout the School, both in classrooms and hallways. We also invite you to explore the ways we make our learning visible electronically:

- In early October, 6th graders had a town hall-style meeting to discuss and determine the 5 values that they want to be central to the work they do as a community this year. They have been doing a lot of individual and group thinking and discussing about possible values and tomorrow will be the culmination. [Here are the results](#), in the students' own words.
- Early Childhood teachers share daily messages on their website pages, such as these from their classrooms: [10.18.16 ECS.pdf](#), [10.24.16 ECN.pdf](#), [10.25.16 ECW.pdf](#).
- Seventh graders conduct interdisciplinary research on the availability of a variety of resources in each ward in DC. Here is the student report on Ward 2: [DC Ward Project Ward 2.pdf](#).