

Increasing School Engagement Through Expressive Arts & Peer-to-Peer Messaging

CIS Art Gallery

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Communities
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Central Texas

The Project

Background:

The coronavirus pandemic brought many challenges, one of which being student attendance and engagement. Research has shown that activities promoting student voice can increase motivation and engagement in learning, so CIS sought out a project allowing student creative expression to help address the issue of school engagement during a COVID year.

Description:

Students submitted artwork depicting their interpretation of the importance of school in their lives, and artwork was made into a virtual and in-person gallery, yard signs, magnets, and stickers, which were given out campus-wide. Classes viewed the gallery together during College & Career Week, and the virtual gallery was shared via family newsletter.



In-person art gallery near the cafeteria

Project Details

57 students submitted artwork

300 stickers of student artwork distributed

50 incentive prizes & certificates given to students



133 students responded to the post-survey

K-5 artwork submitted from all grade levels

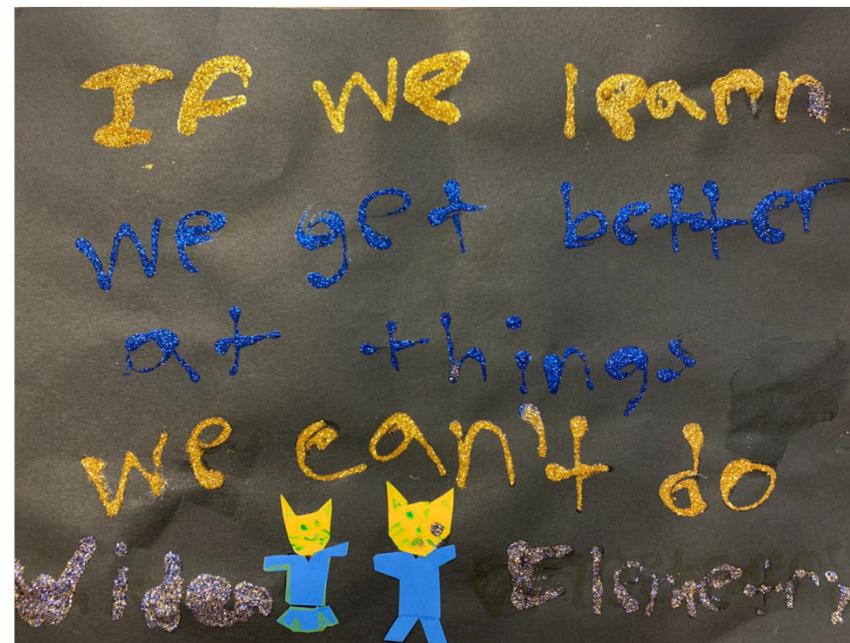
10 yard signs made for the outside of school

Project Outcomes

post-surveys were collected from students and staff

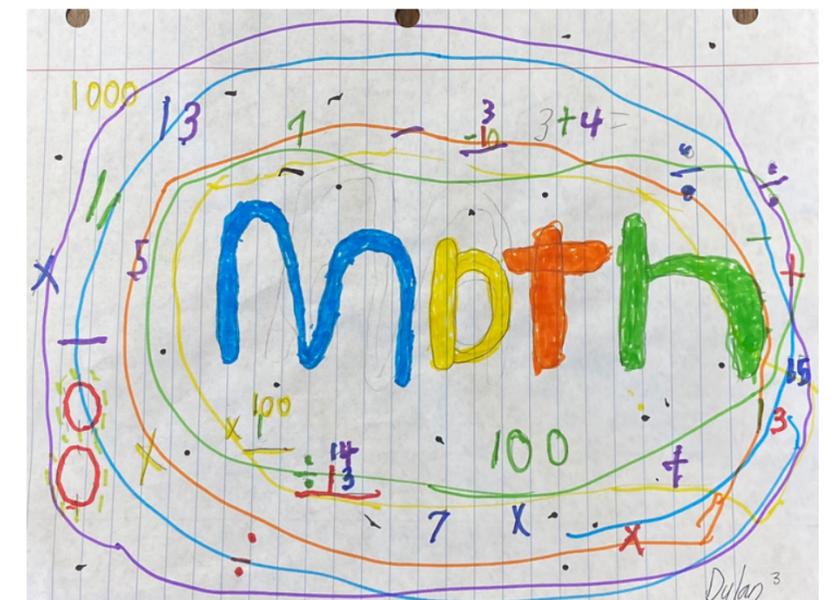
88%

of students who responded to the survey reported that the art gallery showed them why school was important



66%

of teachers who responded to the survey reported that the art gallery helped encourage school engagement (as evidenced by "a lot" on Likert scale)



83%

of teachers who responded to the survey reported that the art gallery had a substantial positive impact on students (as evidenced by "a lot" on Likert scale)

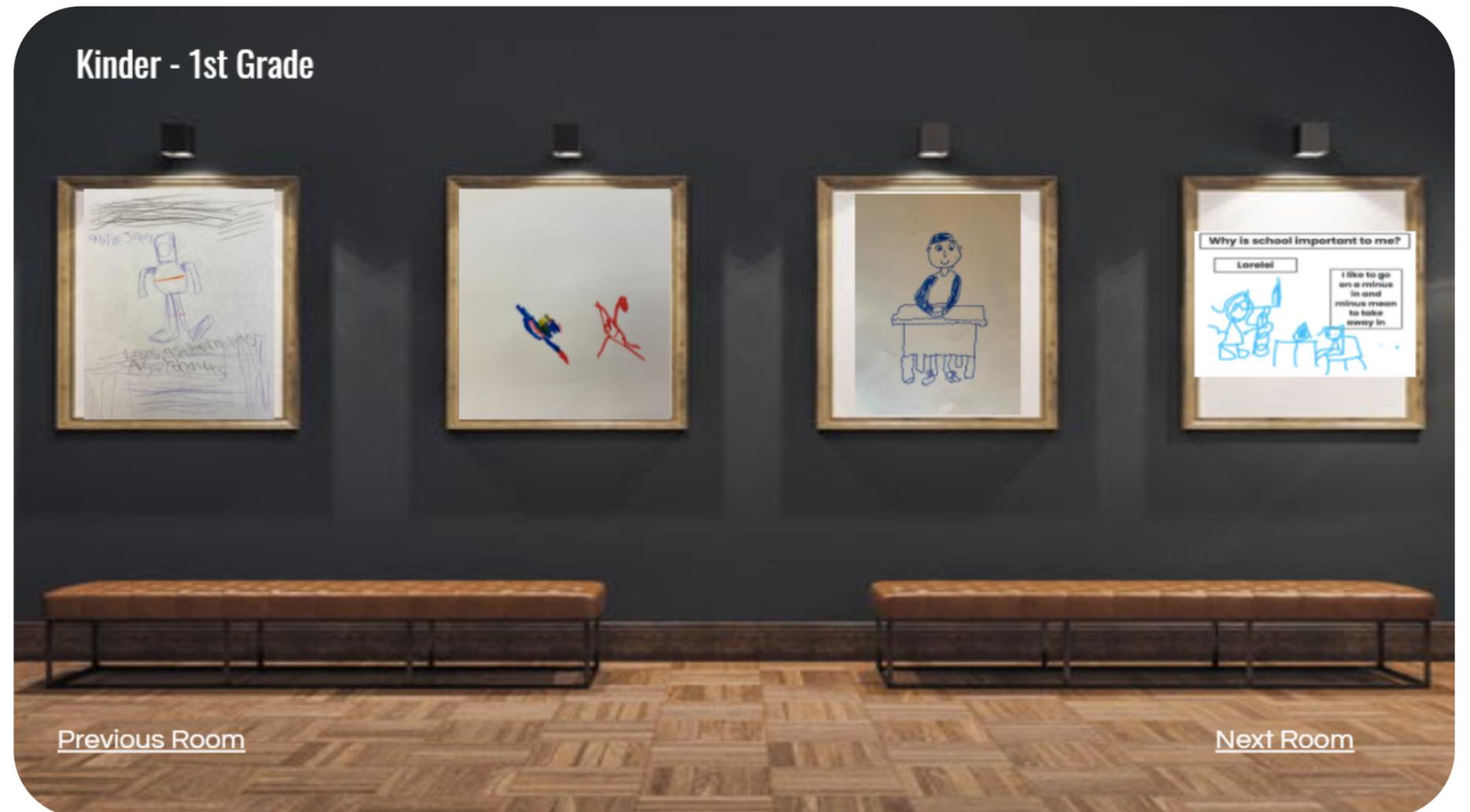
"It was great for students to have a place to share their art with the campus. I have several [pieces] of their art in my classroom, but to see it virtually and knowing that others are seeing it, then it gave them a boost of confidence."

-teacher



The Project Summary

In total, 16% of the student population chose to participate in the art gallery. I think this was due to the fact that only about 50% of students were learning in-person during the time that the art gallery was open. Despite a slow start, we ended up receiving over 50 submissions across all grade levels. A positive result of this project was the feeling of pride and accomplishment among students, and the project helped spark collaboration between CIS and the essential areas team, thus strengthening campus relationships.



One of the Kinder/1st grade art gallery rooms

What We Learned

Success:

A success from this project was the positive feedback from staff and receiving over 50 submissions of artwork. One teacher even requested that CIS host the art gallery again next year. Many students were eager to submit artwork once they saw the incentives for participating, and the fact that the gallery was shared publicly helped give students a sense of pride.

Challenge:

With remote learners not always logging on to Zoom, some missed the opportunity to view the art gallery with their class. Because of this, a challenge was ensuring the art gallery reached every student. If we were to do this project again, I would ensure teachers posted the link to the art gallery on their pages so students and parents could access it at any time. Another challenge was getting the stickers to remote learners. Even if some did receive their sticker, it is possible they missed the context of the art gallery (and guided class discussion), and therefore the impact may not have been as substantial as it would have been otherwise.



AmeriCorps member, Pilar Rodriguez, sets up a yard sign of student artwork by the main road

How the Grant Funds Supported the Project



Grant funds were used for incentive items to encourage student participation. Students enjoyed receiving a goody bag and certificate signed by the principal and CIS Program Manager (left) the same day artwork was submitted.

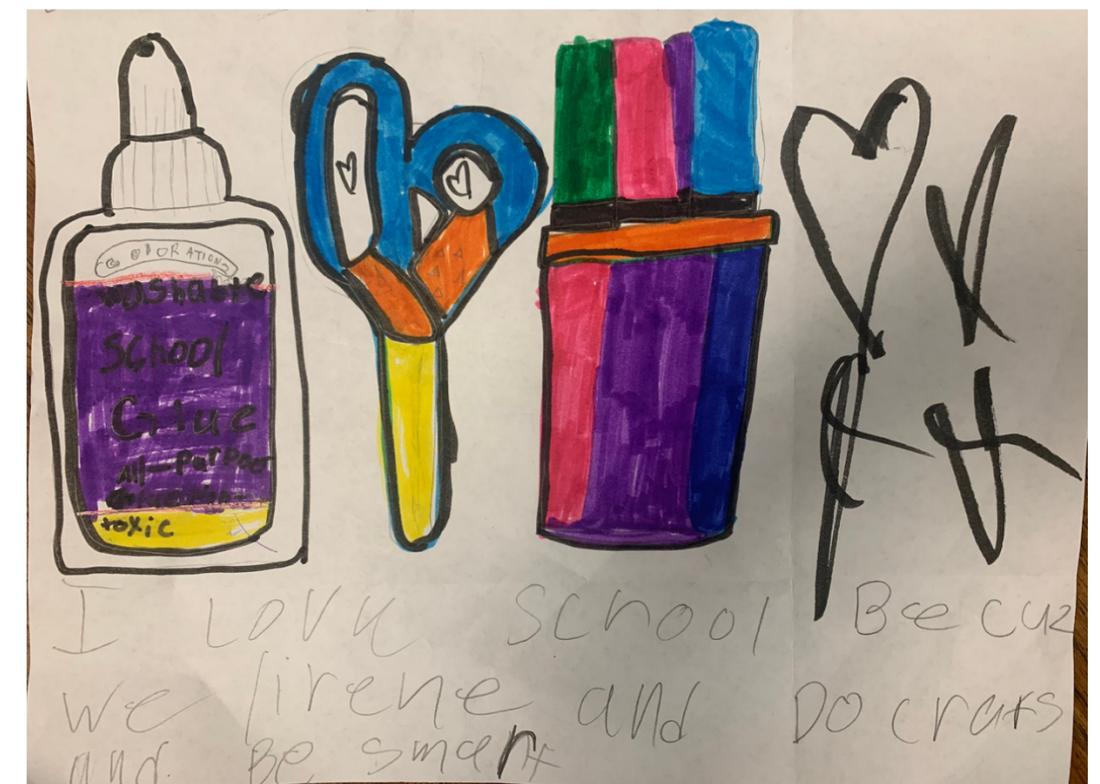
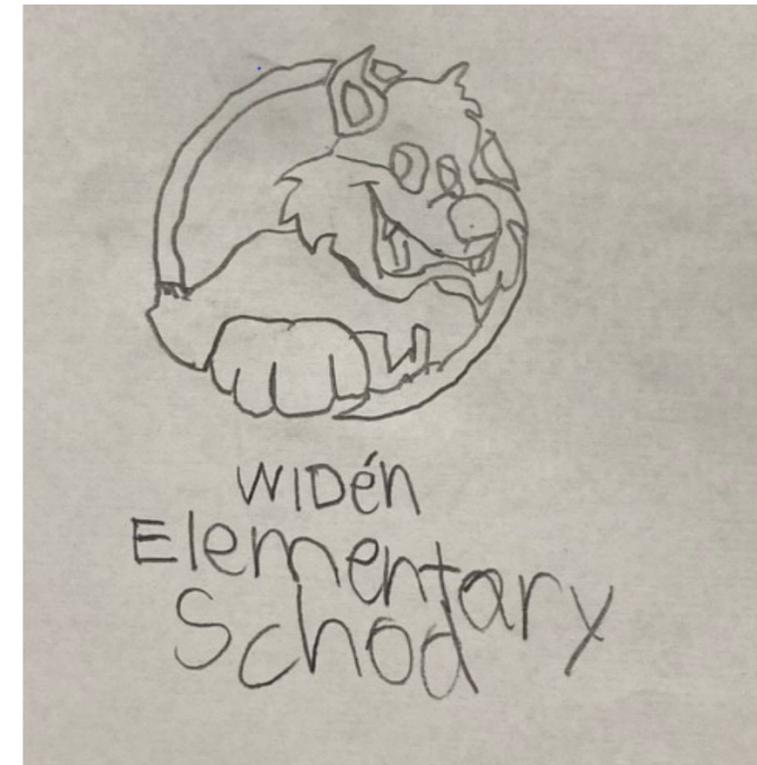
Funds were also used to make magnets of each student's artwork for them to keep, as well as over 400 stickers which were given out campus-wide (right). Yard signs were also made for the school grounds to spread the positive messages at drop-off, dismissal, and within the community. Additionally, funds helped provide a popsicle party for student artists and the purchasing of frames for the physical art gallery, which will remain up through the fall semester and rotate through art submissions.



A Hope I Have After This Grant-Funded Project

This schoolwide event was an opportunity for students to gain a sense of accomplishment, add to a positive school climate, and perhaps support classmates' engagement in their own education. Students were able to participate at a level that was comfortable to them, still knowing that their artwork would be shared. I hope students were able to begin to consider the impact school can make on their lives even from a young age through completing this project as part of College & Career Week.

I also hope that more opportunities can be made for self-expression among our campus community. If administration is in agreement, CIS may host another art gallery next school year to continue the tradition!



Thank you!



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