



Communications

24525 Hilliard Blvd.
Westlake, OH 44145
440.250.1258

www.wlake.org
bonvissuto@wlake.org

Dec. 12, 2016

CULTURAL TRADITION EXCHANGE

When Brooke Romp's and Nora Brady's first-grade classes at Hilliard Elementary School began studying a unit focused on traditions and holidays around Thanksgiving, they parlayed that into an International Baccalaureate unit that compared and contrasted their own family traditions with cultural traditions around the world.

Elementary IB Coordinator Deb Wadden found a request from a teacher in New Zealand asking K-1 teachers to Skype or Google Hangout to discuss holidays and traditions around the world. She connected with Angelee Jarrett at St. Mark's School in New Zealand.

"It was tricky with the time change, but we found a window of about 20 minutes when the New Zealand students were arriving at school and our students were getting ready to head home," Wadden says.

On Dec. 7, Hilliard first-grade students chatted via Google Hangout with kindergarten students in New Zealand, who were about to start their summer vacation since they live in the southern hemisphere. The students discussed the similarities and differences in their celebrations and traditions. Westlake students explained Thanksgiving, while the New Zealand students explained a holiday that celebrates the harvest, as well as celebrations of Queen Elizabeth's birthday and Boxing Day.

The exchange coincided with an IB unit on "How we express ourselves."

One thing both sets of students were excited to discover is that they have Elf on the Shelf in common!

Westlake students examined a globe to try to understand the distance, location and concept of time zones. New Zealand is 18 hours ahead of Northeast Ohio. Once the New Zealand students return from their summer break, more connections may be planned.

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