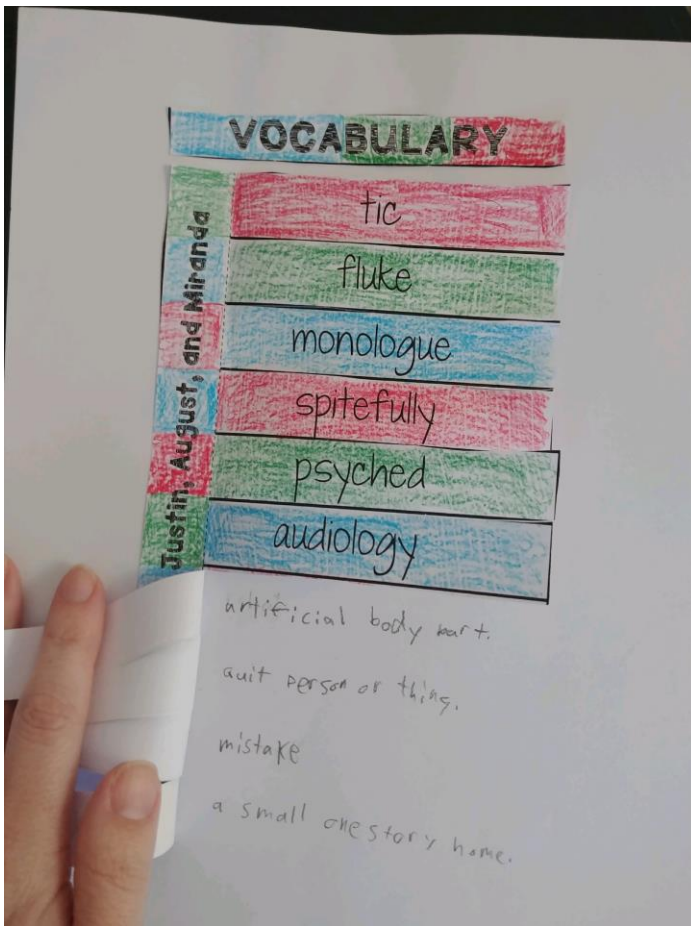




Third and Fourth Grade Literacy Lesson

Novel studies are a key component of Seabury's literacy program because studying novels (or picture books with younger students) provide opportunities for developing high level comprehension and critical and analytical reasoning and can support social-emotional learning as students relate to characters and explore feelings and situations.



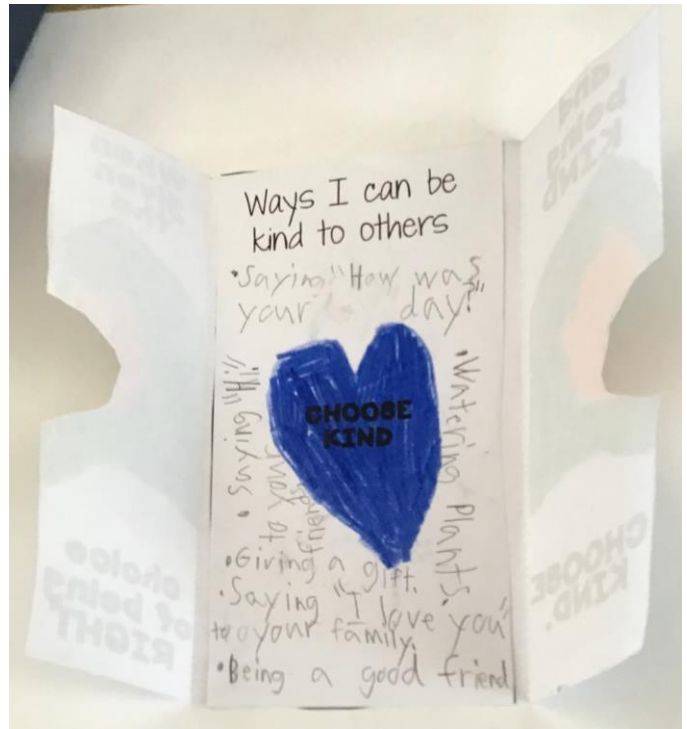
Seabury's 3rd and 4th grade students have been reading *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio in their literacy studies during distance learning. In the study of *Wonder*, students have explored the world of Auggie, a boy with a rare condition that causes facial deformities. It is a story of struggle, but also of empathy, compassion and acceptance of others and a story of looking past what's on the outside to see who someone truly is on the inside. The story is told from many perspectives including Auggie's, his sister's, his classmates' and his neighbors', providing opportunities for students to explore ideas such as bias and what constitutes true beauty through the eyes of many different people.

Students have been responding to this powerful narrative through small and large group discussions on Zoom, in writing assignments including research on Auggie's condition and personal reflections on the story, and through a variety of projects related to the book. At the end of the book, students will view the movie and then compare and contrast it with the novel. *Wonder* is written with rich language which has allowed for vocabulary development and explorations of how choosing rich language creates images that leap off the page. In a recent class discussion, one student shared that he wished Auggie were a real boy because he would want to be Auggie's friend.

Discussions of what empathy looks like and how bias can cause us to miss out on opportunities to know incredibly special people have challenged students to examine their own biases and think about how they can be more kind to others. Bibliotherapy is a powerful tool for supporting the social-emotional needs of students and has been found to be particularly effective with gifted students who think deeply and feel intensely. It also gives opportunities for

students to personally connect with the feelings of the characters in the book, including sadness, fear, loneliness, kindness, and compassion.

Distance learning has meant that discussions have been on Zoom and writing has been shared, critiqued and published electronically. But the power of the novel to inspire and stretch the imagination has remained powerful in Distance Learning: Seabury Style.



Seabury School challenges gifted children in a community that cherishes each individual and fosters a love of learning, discovery and creativity.

– Seabury Mission Statement