

Following A Wonder

Have you ever followed a question to its answer? What happens when your first question leads to more questions? As the Monarchs at Northern Lights were exploring Daly Street they discovered that one question led to another.

In the middle of January, the students in Michele's Kindergarten class, known as the Monarchs, noticed a small sign just below a STOP sign on Daly Street. After Michele read the sign to them, they wondered if the truck they saw was parked 30 feet from the stop sign.



They began to answer this question in the Art Studio. Using 12-inch rulers, the students worked together to see how long 30 feet really was.

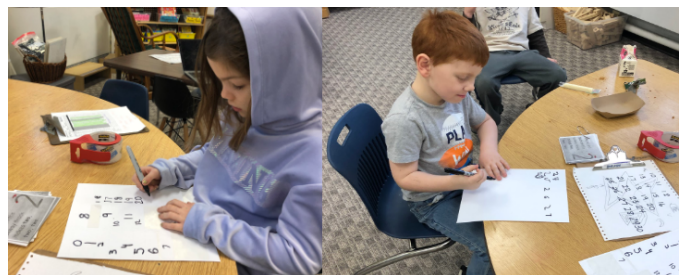


They soon found out that the Art Studio was shorter than 30 feet. They decided that the hallway might be long enough so they moved their counting out there. They were amazed at how long 30 feet really was!



Over the next couple of days, the Monarchs continued to measure 30 feet in the hallway and build a 30-foot number line. Students throughout the school now walk and count on our masking tape number line as they move through the hallway.

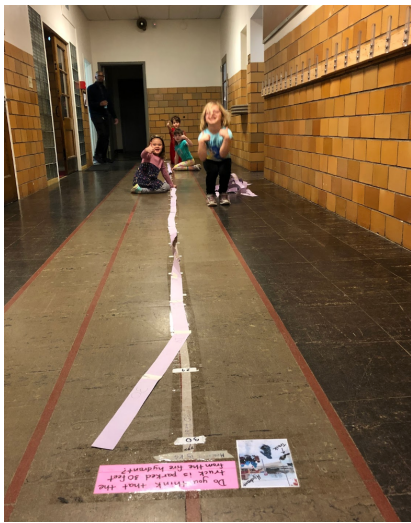
But after all this work, they still couldn't answer the original question: Was the truck parked 30 feet from the sign? They couldn't move their number line outside and it was too hard to line up 30 rulers. They talked about how they could measure outside and the idea of a tape measure came up. And so the Monarchs set out to build tape measures that were 30 feet long.



This was hard work but the students stuck with it over three days. They collaborated with one another, helped each other when they got stuck and celebrated when they reached 30 feet!



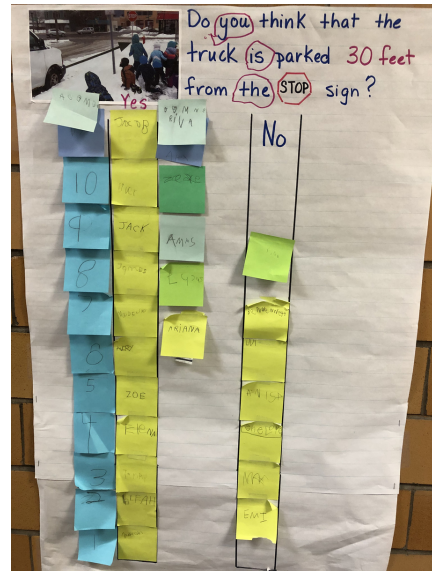
The Monarchs used the tape measure in the hallway to test their measures for accuracy.



Finally, they were ready to go outside and use their tape measures on Daly Street.



Most students had predicted that the car was parked more than 30 feet from the sign. And after measuring it they were right.



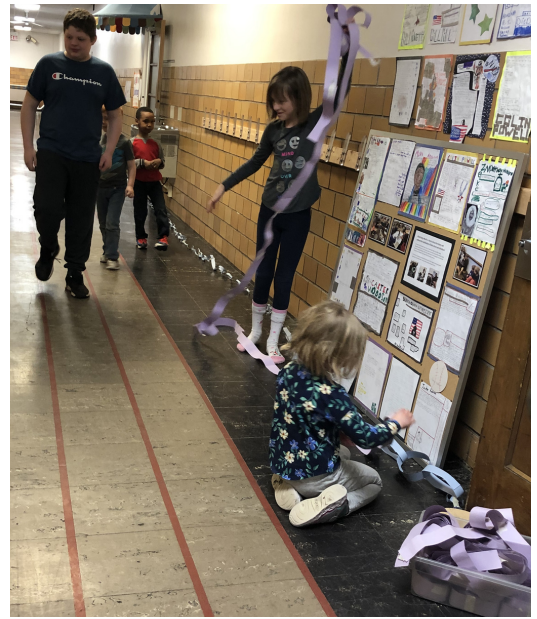
Back in the studio, they were asked to prove that the truck really was parked more than 30 feet from the sign. Using photographs, students created models to help explain their thinking.



Then, during the first week of March, Nora and Sally's classes, who are STEM buddies, created a very long paper chain. They needed help figuring out how long it actually was and they knew the Monarchs had a lot of tape measures. The Monarchs headed upstairs and with the help of Carole's class laid out their tape measures end to end.



Lily, a 4th grader in Carole's class, recounts, "It was two of the 30 foot ones and then a little more, like 5 feet." The STEM buddies had built a 65 foot long chain!



For now, the Monarchs have put away their measuring tapes. What had started as a question about words on a sign led to a month long exploration of numbers and measuring, which gave way to art projects and multiple opportunities to collaborate within and between classrooms.