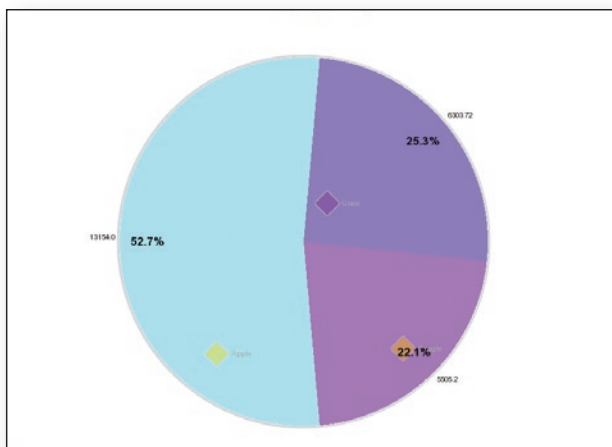


## Sixth Graders Build Stock Portfolios, Analyze Earnings with InspireData®

With \$25,000 to spend and InspireData® at their fingertips, 18 sixth-grade math students in Pennsylvania learned the ups and downs of investing in the stock market while building data analysis and math skills.

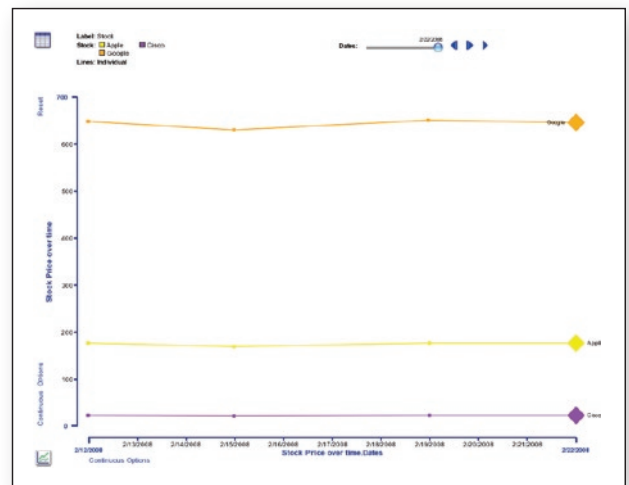
These students at Ancillae-Assumpta Academy, a preK-8 Catholic school outside of Philadelphia, used their money to buy shares of Juicy Couture, McDonald's, Nike and Coca-Cola, just to name a few. The money wasn't real, but that didn't matter as they learned how to track their investments and use diagrams and graphs to understand data.

Technology coordinator Melinda O'Neill and math teacher Jeanne Hisey used the stock market lesson as a way to teach a state standard on graphing. To make the project come alive, they used InspireData, the visual way to explore and understand data from Inspiration® Software, Inc. With InspireData, students investigate, analyze and interpret data and information in dynamic graphs and charts. InspireData tools make it easy to change variables and plot types so students can explore data in multiple, meaningful ways. This encourages them to investigate data analytically, ask more questions and apply their understanding of the data to form better conclusions and to continue exploration.



Creating pie charts allowed the students to see the total dollar amount spent on each individual stock, as well as the percentage of students who had chosen that particular stock.

"InspireData worked really, really well, and I am so hyped about it," said O'Neill. "It's really kid-friendly—very intuitive. They just figured it out as they went and got the hang of it very quickly."



Using InspireData, Ancillar-Assumpta Academy students created graphs and diagrams to track their investments, see real live results and analyze the data. This InspireData graph was used to analyze stock prices over various date ranges.

The reason for choosing a project that involved capturing live data was two-fold, she said. She wanted the lesson to be meaningful to students, and she was testing InspireData to see if it would be an effective tool for the upcoming science fair, where using live data is critical.

Hisey liked the real-world application of the project. "My strong belief is that when teaching math, we need to show students how it can be used in their daily lives," she said. "This was a fun project because they were able to pick stocks that interested them while they learned about economics and finance."

The students went right to work with InspireData, creating a database that included the purchase price of the stocks, numbers of shares and amount of money spent. Next, they turned the data into pie graphs that showed their stocks and the proportional quantity of

each. In the Notes tool in InspireData, they wrote why they picked particular stocks. "Truthfully, no one knew why. They just chose what they liked, and they had some crazy picks," said O'Neill.

Some students allotted exactly one-third of their \$25,000 to each stock, while others put 50 percent of it on one stock and 25 percent on the other two, and some chose completely random amounts—all visible on their pie charts, she said. Because none of the purchases added up to exactly \$25,000, the students placed leftover funds in money market accounts and monitored them as well.

Students made bar charts to document live data that they would input each Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Over a three-week period, the students monitored their investments, entering the day's closing price on each of their stocks.

Next, the students created line graphs, with three lines revealing how their stocks changed over the three weeks. "The students could see in living color how each stock was changing, looking at price over time," said O'Neill. "They could see how the market fluctuates."

At the end of the three weeks, O'Neill created bar graph data at the classroom level of all the students' investments and turned it over to them to manipulate the data. "They graphed it by student to see who had the highest gains and losses, and it prompted a

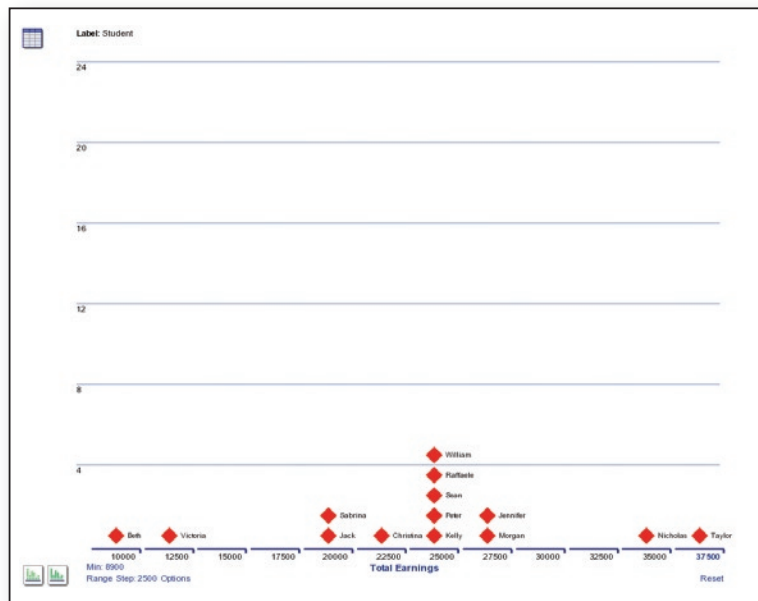
discussion about making wise investments," she said. The students were impressed with the choices of one student, who made the greatest financial gain, and they asked him how he chose his stocks. "He said his dad chose them."

This project, she said, fit easily into class each day. "It's not like a lot of projects where teachers don't have the time to take them on." O'Neill plans to expand the stock market project to all four sixth-grade math classes, and she believes it will be a strong lesson for students at all ability levels.

Now with school-wide access to InspireData at Ancillae-Assumpta Academy, students will be ready when it's time for the science fair. "In the past, students have had a hard time applying their science fair data into relevant line and bar graphs," she said.

In addition, O'Neill plans to use InspireData with the fifth- and sixth-grade social studies classes to study population changes. "They'll love InspireData – it's just so clear, and they can do so much with it," she said.

Hisey agreed, noting that visual learning helps students build understanding. "Without InspireData, we would have been building graphs by hand, which is very time-consuming. What the students produced was so impressive. When they were done, they had something they were very proud of!"



The stack plot added up the total dollar amount of earnings for each student, based on their choice of stock purchase.



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