STEMPOWER NEWSLETTER
WEEK 8 - VERTICAL SLICE

This week the team worked hard to make a Wednesday deadline to finish a vertical slice of Sleepy Busy Planet for two remote playtests, one in West Virginia and another in Ohio. The latest build is now available on our website on the Current Build page. It now has more art for the UI elements, more particles and effects as the characters wake up and get to work, and gives the player the option to try again at the end of the level to see if they can get a better score.

On Tuesday we gave a short presentation about our project to a group of visitors from the Sesame Workshop. They seemed to like our design and what we are trying to teach with it and had some good comments for us to think about.
- They felt our art style for the characters was cute though it might be straying too close to "preschool round." However, they added that putting a little funky spin on it somehow with some over the top animations or weird voiceovers could help keep it from being perceived as too cute and unappealing to our target demographic.
- It was suggested that we could also try to fold some geography education into the game as well, but we feel that this could end up being too distracting, as well as outside of our scope for the semester.
- The idea of some form of customization for the player was also brought up, such as designing their own flag which could be planted on the map where the player lives. This is something we could see potentially fitting in after halves since it could help drive home the player's place on earth as they see it turn.

On Tuesday of next week we'll be hosting an in-person playtest at the ETC with a small group of local students ranging from first through fifth grade. By then we should also have the results back from our remote playtests so we can begin reacting to the feedback we'll have at that point. Finally, next Friday we'll be giving our halves presentation.

Some screenshots from our latest build of Sleepy Busy Planet