LEARNING ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

Staff	Students	Budget	Cost Per Student
7.59	150	$653,728	$4,358

Primary Goal: To stimulate academically talented students to develop higher thinking skills and advanced research skills.

Enrollment: During 2007-2008, 150 students (6.5% of the total population) were placed in the Learning Enrichment Program. The participation by school was as follows:

School	Number of Students
Blue Creek	8
Boght Hills	48
Forts Ferry	28
Latham Ridge	14
Loudonville	21
Southgate	31

The grade level breakdown was as follows:

Grade Level	Number of Students	Percent of Class
1	9	2.5%
2	3	1%
3	24	7%
4	28	7%
5	38	9%
6	48	11%

The program identifications were: reading: 98 (65% of population), mathematics: 76* (51% of population) and English/Language Arts (writing: 66 (44% of population) and science: 5 (1% of the population). There were 6 additional students in the program who are in the very superior range of academic ability but for whom we could not identify subject areas at this time.

These are duplicated counts since many students are labeled in more than one program area. The math students are placed in the Alternate Math Program at grade 5. In that program there are additional talented math students who are not reflected in these numbers.

*This includes students being "monitored" for math since we no longer label math students as gifted/ talented below grade 5. "Math monitor" students are those from grades 1-4 who have been found to have high math potential resulting from PST discussions regarding placement in the learning enrichment program. It is a way of ensuring that they are not overlooked when placements are made for grades 5.

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HIGHLIGHTS

- The informational meeting for parents in early fall was well attended and well received. In addition to updating the PowerPoint program that parents were shown, parents were given a logic puzzle to solve. Some were successful but all seemed to enjoy the activity. The question/answer session was lively.

- The three student seminars, Around the World in Eight Days, Revolutionary War Microcosm and Classic Moods (art, music, literature) received enthusiastic participation from students involved.

- The Spelling Bee in February for students in grades 4-8 who won in their local school competitions is not restricted to learning enrichment students. Although most students seem to thrive on competition, practices have been instituted to make students more comfortable while they sit on the stage facing a large audience. Each contestant may bring his/her class for support. The name and school is projected as each contestant spells. The event begins with a full practice round. Also, students who misspell a word remain seated on the stage.

- "Young Writers" is a second semester program for talented writers in grades 4-6. Those who are so designated in the learning enrichment program are expected to participate. Others may be nominated by their classroom teacher and, with approval from the principal, invited to attend. The kick-off is scheduled at the beginning of second semester. This is the time when students learn about the theme and the guidelines. The themes are on a 3-year rotation. In 2006-2007 it was historical fiction – a challenging genre for young writers. The focus was on the American Civil War; the topic was introduced with background music, video clips, authentic diary entries, and literature. During the remainder of the semester the students were engaged in writing. A Board of Editors (classroom teachers) critiqued their work at mid-point and at the deadline date. All students who submitted a written piece were invited to a conference at Rensselaerville Institute where they attended workshops about historical fiction presented by professional writers. Their written pieces were critiqued by an English teacher on the junior high staff. He identifies those worthy of publication in our "Circle of Excellence." He expressed admiration for the quality of the writing and selected so many that we had to publish in two volumes.

- The student fairs were of excellent quality. Each student submitted a bibliography of sources which was sent on to me for evaluation. Fourth grades presented an economic summit which required each student to

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describe an economic concept and illustrate it in real-life terms to demonstrate understanding. Fifth graders had researched subjects related to the American Revolutionary War era-life and times, economics, politics, military strategies and weaponry, engineering and Benedict Arnold. Each group planned a presentation to reflect the depth of their research, and each student in the group did an individual 2-minute presentation.

- The 6th graders debated "Resolved: The Cost to Consumers for Prescription Drugs is Well Justified." This is an interschool contest. All students research both sides before the pro-con teams are selected. Formal debate rules are used. Teachers serve as judges. Score sheets are given to me at the end of debate. Each student is awarded a pin and each winning team received a trophy for the school.

OBJECTIVES

- Examine the research components of the grade 4 and 5 reflection units. Raise the level of expectations. Re-introduce the use of bibliographies as part of the final products. Also study the options for presentations to parents that more clearly reflect the depth of the study.

  Evaluation: Were expectations for student achievement raised? Were bibliographies required? Did the presentations of student work reflect the seriousness and depth of their work?

  The student achievement level as demonstrated on the grade 4 and 5 research units were raised considerably. Each student compiled a bibliography in proper form to reflect sources used in the research. The teachers evaluated the quality of sources used and the information extracted. The bibliographies were then sent to the Director's office for a follow-up evaluation.

  The presentations at the student fair reflected the depth of their work. Each fourth grade student presented an economic concept with clarity and obvious understanding. They also used "down to earth" illustrations for our benefit.

  Each grade 5 student spoke for two minutes about a select topic related to the Revolutionary War. Although each student did independent research, the presentation had to be part of a group presentation developed and staged by the class.