PrescottValleyTribune

Wednesday, July 24, 2013

Getting a jump start on algebra helps ensure success

Sue Tone Reporter

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Incoming eighth-graders from all three middle schools in the <u>Humboldt Unified School District</u> spent four days this summer filling in gaps and strengthening their math skills.

Sure, it was tough getting up in the morning, several students said this past Thursday at Liberty Traditional School, but for the most part they enjoyed the hands-on activities that included throwing dice, sorting M&Ms, and shuffling cards, for example. Through these "games," the students learned the concepts to figure out probability.

Leta Barnes, Glassford Hill Middle School math teacher and math department chair, said the district identified students needing help - and wanting help - to improve their math abilities by looking at test results from this spring's AIMS scores. Students worked on math a solid four hours on each of the four days this past week.

"It has really helped to catch the weak areas and fill the gaps for next year," Barnes said.

The summer Jump Into Algebra class is part of the GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Program) grant the district received in June 2012. It pays for two coordinators and one assistant to work with a group of seventh-graders beginning with the 2012-2013 school year, and follow those same students through grade 12.

This is the third round of GEAR UP in Arizona, and the first participation in the program for HUSD students. Its purpose is to increase the number of students from low-income communities to enter, and be better prepared for, post-secondary education.

Barnes said some of the programs used with the seventh-graders this past year remain in place for incoming seventh-graders this year.



Math teacher Leta Barnes, right, works with incoming eighth-grader Matthew Tamay on on fractions as part of a four-day Jump Into Algebra class this past week at Liberty Traditional School. Trib Photo/Sue Tone



Incoming eighth-grader Angel Verdugo works on plotting coordinates in his four-day Jump Into

"The grant money is to help support the school district to create programs. Once the money is gone, the program will survive," she said.

Algebra class at Liberty Traditional School. Trib Photo/Sue Tone

GEAR UP students receive career exploration, academic advisement, skill building workshops, and mentoring.

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Clarification

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Regarding the July 24, 2013, story "Getting a jump start on algebra helps ensure success," information provided to the Tribune was incorrect.

Gear Up co-coordinator Sandra Clark states that AIMS scores are not available in July and therefore are not used to select students for the four-day summer Jump Into Algebra class.

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