

Portland Observer **Education**

Revolutionary Math Finds Winning Combination Again

Once again, a group of Portland inner-city kids participated in a summer math study program and scored notable gains. The 15 students in this year's program scored an average of 2.6 years gain in math skills in 5 weeks.

The students were participants in Revolutionary Math, a math/study skills program designed especially for kids in Portland inner-city middle schools — kids who do not achieve their full potential in the Portland Public School system. These kids identified as being "at risk", and they are. Having basic math skills and knowing that they are smart, capable learners is vital to their current and future performance and well-being. These are kids that could easily get lost or ignored by the system. They could easily remain "under-achievers", and even worse, they could see themselves as such. Instead, they

are picked up by Revolutionary Math.

The program is unique in its approach. Students meet five days a week for five weeks. High expectations, an emphasis on study skills, and parental involvement are the hallmarks of this program. Revolutionary Math uses video to help kids learn, and to document their learning process. The kids participate in the video-making process, and walk away with a kid-friendly video that they are proud to share with their friends. Thus, these "at risk" kids score gains for themselves, and they become catalysts for other kids' learning as well. This is the third summer this program has run, with consistently positive results.

Revolutionary Math helps insure that the math gains kids make during the school year are not lost during the summer months when they are not in school. Rather than losing ground during the summer, the Revo-



Aris Brooks and Emmet H. are part of a group of inner-city kids who increased their math skills over the summer vacation.

lutionary Math kids are taking notable leaps forward. The program also gives kids the message that they are smart and capable learners. Hence, the title for this year's video, Revolutionary Math: I Can Think! Every year, kids in this program prove that, indeed, they can think.

This was the third summer Revolutionary Math has been available for inner-city Portland kids. In 1998, eight kids participated and scored an average of 2.5 years gain in 6 weeks, as measured by the California Achievement Test. In 1999, 13 kids participated and scored an average of 23 points gain in 5 weeks, as measured by the Carat testing system (used by Portland Public Schools). In 2000, 15 kids participated and scored an average of 2.6 years gain in 5 weeks, as measured by the Stanford Diagnostic Test. LaNita Duke, program coordinator, is beginning fundraising for next

summer's group; she hopes to be able to offer Revolutionary Math to 25 students in summer 2001.

Prior year's programs were open only to girls. This year, the girls voted and agreed to allow boys into their group. Three of the fifteen kids in this year's program were boys. Each year there is a premier party to release the video and honor program participants. This year's party will be held the evening of September 28. Call 297-9074 for more information.

Summer 2000 Revolutionary Math was sponsored by the PGE Foundation Youth Involvement Network, as well as Metro, North Portland Enhancement Committee, Caring community of north Portland, GIFT/Multnomah County Department of Community & Family Services, Portland Parks & Recreation Youth Trust Fund, and the Multnomah County Department of Community Corrections.

Good Survey for City Schools

Portland's teachers, administrators, and staff received a strong vote of confidence from a satisfaction survey conducted with students, parents and school staff in Spring 2000.

The satisfaction survey was given to students in grades four through twelve, school staff and parents.

Most of the 34,314 parents, staff and students who took part in the survey believe that Portland Public Schools are doing a good job (92 percent), and that children are learning what they need to know (87 percent). The survey results found that parents are well satisfied with the local school their child attends. Generally, parents, school staff and students agree that many practices

assessed on the survey are evident in their school.

When compared to last year's results, parent satisfaction showed significant improvement in four areas: children are learning what they need to know on subjects other than basic skills; students discipline is giving all students the chance to learn; children know what is needed to meet State standards and schools are viewed as safe.

Parents gave high ratings to school staffs' availability to talk with families about their concerns. Interestingly enough, parent satisfaction declined sharply when asked if teachers often talked with families

about important matters, such as teaching plans or homework. "Clearly, we need to look at this data, particularly trends over time, continue to do well where we are doing well, and focus on improving where we are not," stated Benjamin Canada, Ph.D., Superintendent of Portland Public Schools. The issue of school communication continues to be of particular concern to parents.

Comments from some individuals recorded as part of the survey show that while most are very satisfied with their school, some worry about a lack of funding, large class sizes, school communications, student safety, and discipline problems that detract from learning.

Schools Gear Up for Mock Election

Over 300 Mock Election "toolkits" are on their way to schools that have registered to participate in Oregon Student Mock Election program this fall.

"This presidential election year, we have an enormous opportunity to teach young people about the electoral process and to engage them in that process," said Secretary of State Bill Bradbury, whose office coordinates the Mock Election program. "Seizing this opportunity will re-

quire parents, candidates, and the media to join the hundreds of schools that are committed to helping students understand the electoral process, what is at stake, and why voting matters."

The Oregon Teacher's Guide to the mock Election provides an overview of Oregon election information including sections on voter registration, the initiative, referral and referendum processes, campaign finance, voting by mail, and the elected offices and measures on the mock election ballot.

The mock vote will take place Oct. 26-31. The results of the statewide student mock election will be announced at a student-led press conference at the Capital on Nov. 2.

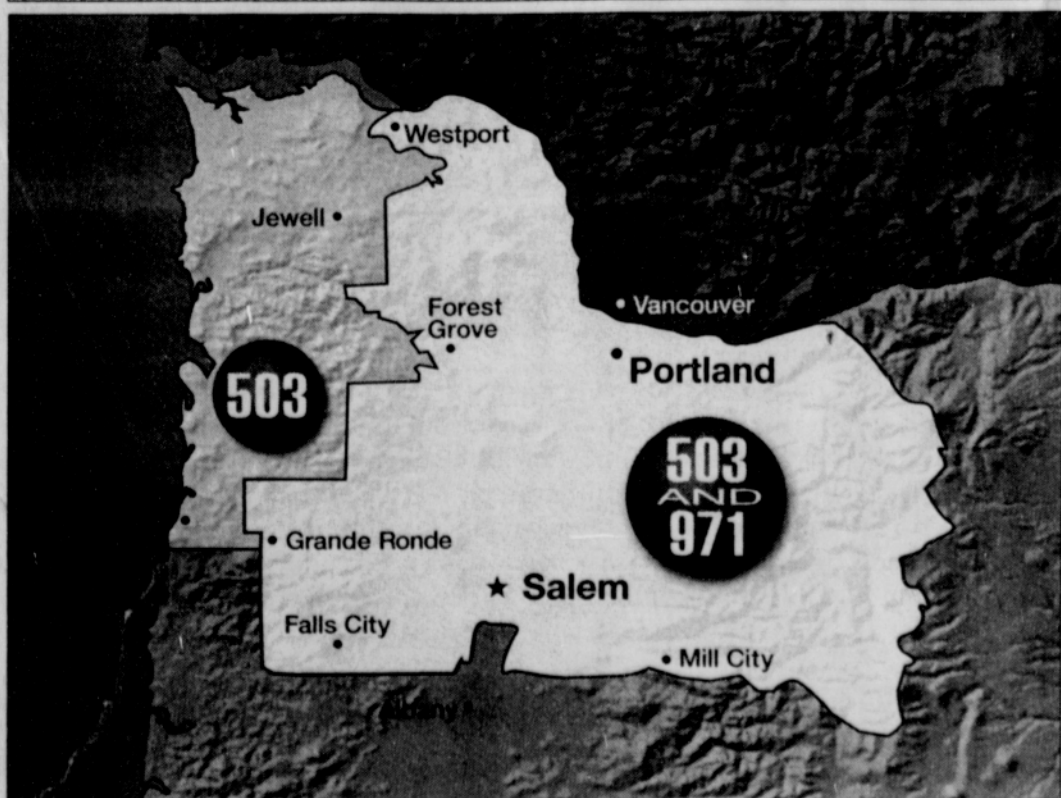
Students of Color Welcomed at OSU

More than 250 people are expected for Oregon State University's student of Color Welcome and Orientation Barbecue on Friday, Sept. 29.

Developed by the OSU Minority Education Office, the barbecue is designed to reinforce the message that OSU values and honors diversity and offers equal opportunity for all students. People can learn ways to be involved, and discuss issues of diversity in a relaxed atmosphere.

The event, which is by invitation only, is set from 5 to 10 p.m., starting in the Marketplace West Patio. The gathering will later move to the campus' Memorial Union Recreation Center.

If you're on speaking terms with anyone in the Portland metro area, be sure to learn the new area code.



To better serve a growing population and its increased reliance on modems, wireless phones, fax machines, and pagers, the phone companies of Oregon have added a new 971 area code to the 503 area. This kind of change is not just occurring in Oregon, but throughout the country. And because the new codes differ in format from previous codes that contained either a '1' or a '0' in the second digit, you should check all specialized Central Office-based systems for compatibility. Some of these systems may require reprogramming or upgrading. Cellular phones must be reprogrammed by your cellular service provider.

To test your equipment, call the new Oregon area code test line at 1-800-000-0000. If you have any difficulty dialing the new area code, please call your operator to assist you in placing your call.



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