BGSU joins forces to help 4th-graders pass test

Ohio elementary schools face a critical turning point next year when new state regulations known as the "Fourth Grade Guarantee" go into effect stating that any fourth-grader who does not pass the reading proficiency exam may not be promoted to fifth grade.

BGSU faculty members have joined with employees of WBGU-FM and the Northwest Ohio Education Technology Foundation to help students succeed in passing the test. They have created an innovative, technology-based tutoring program for third- and fourth-graders. Ohio STL focuses on Literature as a means to improve reading and writing skills through the context of social studies and citizenship topics, subjects which are also included on the state proficiency tests.

The group has received $524,412 from the Ohio Educational Technology Network Commission (OET) to develop the Web-based programming, videotape "field trips" and print materials for teachers and students.

Beginning August next year, all 32 percent of students passed the reading portion, 53 percent of the writing and 36 percent of the citizenship.

The grant was awarded in support of Ohio's school network of Ohio Technical Career Center's of two regional awards to public television stations in Ohio. The grants are targeted to the state's low-wealth school districts.

WBGU directly serves 32 low-wealth districts in 16 counties of northwest Ohio. These districts will receive Ohio STL free of charge. All other school districts in the region may purchase the program at low cost.

Robert Short, WBGU's director of television learning services, Roger Miner, executive director of NWOTE, and Allison Goodlow, NWOTE associate director of development, created the test, developed the technologies involved, and directed the content. Competitive Grant, journalism, will conduct the evaluation of the program. Short noted that the impetus for the tutoring program occurred when $912 percent of schools in the low-wealth districts scored below the state standard for reading proficiency. Students seemed to have special difficulties with the non-fiction reading portions of the test, but did not need help on the math portion.

To be eligible to participate in the "Alcohol and the American College Campus" conference, it was required that the student body, not the students, and that the university president or a faculty member or staff member of the university be in attendance. The conference was multi-faceted, and its focus was on creating a healthy environment for the students.

University campuses need to take action against alcohol use on campus in order to increase the likelihood of students educating themselves about the dangers of alcohol. This is crucial because of the problem of alcohol abuse in the United States, especially among college students.

The challenge is to encourage students to think critically about the use of alcohol and to develop strategies for reducing its consumption. This requires the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, and administrators.

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