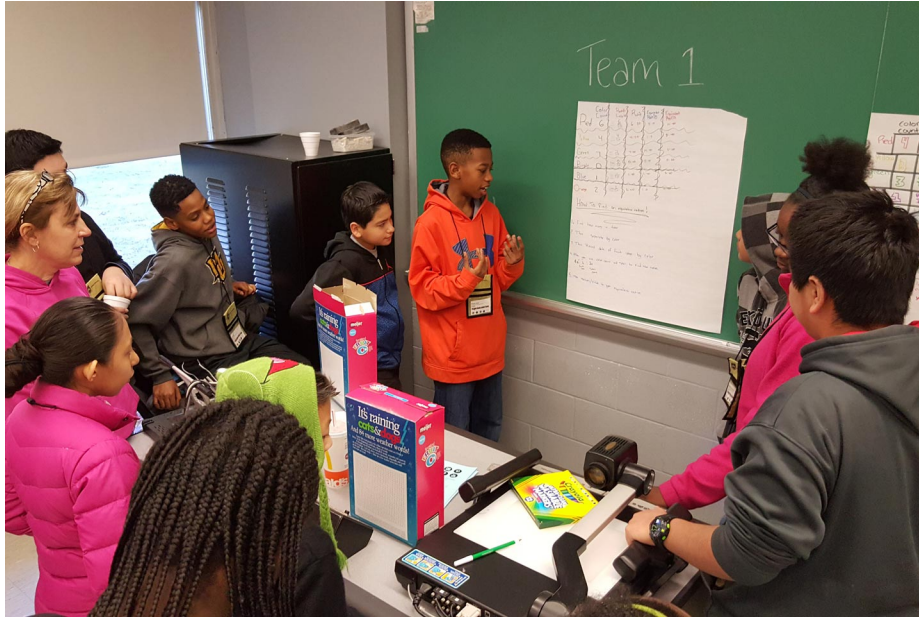


Pre-College programs lead to higher test scores for Pontiac students



Students in Pre-College Programs' Saturday Math Academies learn pre-algebra on Oakland's campus this spring. More than 80 students in the program saw increased math competency because of the interactive nature of the academies.

Kids' math competencies in Pontiac schools are dramatically increasing thanks to a partnership between the local school district and Oakland University, officials with Oakland's Pre-College Programs announced.

The program, called the Pre-Algebra Saturday Academies, ran in two separate semesters – Fall 2015 and Spring 2016 – over the course of five consecutive Saturdays on Oakland's campus.

Seventh-graders from Pontiac Middle School and International Technology Academy attended four-hour interactive classes taught by teachers from the district and assisted by Oakland University's Pre-College Programs staff. There were 84 students total in the two academies.

Tiffany Elliott-Fowler, assistant director of Oakland's Pre-College Programs, said students were given a pre-test at the beginning of the math academies, then were given the same post-test at the end of the five weeks. Students in the fall semester academy had an average test score increase of 37 percent and students' test scores in the spring academy rose 24 percent on average.

The programs focused on traditional pre-algebra topics such as solving equations, ratios and integers, but the classroom setting was anything but traditional, said Elliott-Fowler.

"Students participated in hands-on activities and other things designed to get them out of their seats, including math gaming programs and other technology," she said. "Another component of our program included giving students the opportunity to learn about college expectations and planning. The students received workshops

related to college admissions and financial planning, along with tours of the campus to show them what to expect when they get to college.”

The two Pontiac teachers each taught a certain number of students during the academies. Elliott-Fowler said that structure of the program was one of the most important components that may have contributed to students’ increased scores.

“The smaller student-to-teacher ratio made it more than a traditional learning atmosphere,” said Elliott-Fowler. “Also, when you’re incorporating math into everyday life and making math fun, it’s more interactive and not just working from a math book.”

The Saturday Academies are only a portion of Oakland’s pre-college outreach – in Pontiac and throughout the region – and a major component in the university’s continued partnership with Pontiac schools, officials and organizations. Another program, Project Upward Bound, works with schools in both the Oak Park and Pontiac school districts to help get students ready for college.

Elliott-Fowler said the Office of Pre-College Programs has been working in Pontiac for many years and that she’s glad to continue helping implement programs that reach students as early as the seventh-grade. “It is important that we continue reaching younger students and assist them in preparing for the rigors of university life while exposing them directly to Oakland University.”

To learn about all the pre-college programs Oakland University has to offer, visit oakland.edu/precollege.