

## TOWN NEWS

EASTERN EDITION

# Mathematics Project Shows Results

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EAST HARTFORD — Lisa Beauchamp, the principal of Hockanum Elementary School, says she is excited because so many of her students are excited.

## EAST HARTFORD

About mathematics.

"It's wonderful," Beauchamp said, referring to Hockanum's role in a research project called Mentoring Mathematical Minds. "This is all about our students and how they learn."

The program was designed by the faculty at the University of Connecticut, Northern Kentucky University and Bos-

## Students Learn To Analyze Problems

ton University and involves teachers, administrators, and students in 10 schools of varying socioeconomic levels in Connecticut and Kentucky.

Hockanum is the only East Hartford school taking part.

Other participating state schools are in Hartford, West Hartford, Mansfield, Storrs and Montville.

The five-year study is for students in grades 3, 4 and 5 and includes a progression of units on topics such as algebraic reasoning, geometry and measurement, and data analysis and probability.

Beauchamp said her school's involvement began three years ago when students who were then in second grade were given assessments designed to

identify mathematical aptitude.

Select students were then paired with Hockanum teachers who have been given extra training to deliver lessons that emphasize problem solving and the spirit of inquiry.

The program was designed in part to address the concern that many capable student mathematicians are sometimes not engaged with or challenged.

As the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics declared in 1980, "The student most neglected in terms of realizing full potential is the gifted student of mathematics."

According to M. Katherine Gavin, who is directing the project through UConn's Neag Center for Gifted Educa-

tion and Talent Development, students exposed to the program have benefited based on multiple assessments given throughout the 10 schools.

In a letter to Karen Radding, the district math coordinator in East Hartford, Gavin said she believes that the "strong emphasis on problem solving and conceptual development enables our students to outperform their peers" on standardized tests.

Beauchamp said her teachers — Laura Caruso in Grade 3, Jed Upson and Catherine Ryan in Grade 4 and Jan Brodis in Grade 5 — have been instrumental in the program's success.

Beauchamp also said all Hockanum students have benefited, because the principles and practices that her teach-

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# Minds

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ers are using with students identified for the program also have been implemented in what she calls "the regular math classes."

Upson said the rigorous curriculum has helped students develop "a willingness to try harder to solve difficult problems." He spends a lot of time working with students on developing skills that allow them to talk about the challenges math can present.

According to the project website, "Many students give up quickly when a math problem looks unfamiliar. However, students who have had practice in talking at length with their peers and teacher about solving mathematics problems tend to persist longer in trying to understand a new problem."

Math instruction throughout the state and country has evolved in recent years to stress to the process of problem solving rather than simply the production of the right answer to an equation.

Radding said students learn "to question the answer, not just answer the question."

*More information about Mentoring Mathematical Minds can be found at [projectm3.org](http://projectm3.org).*