



Oak Crest Private School Students Awarded Title of Best Young Mathematicians in DFW



Thirty-one schools selected their four best math students to compete against each other as a part of the Explore Horizons Young Mathematicians Awards competition. Oak Crest Private School selected their four top math students out of seventeen children that were between fourth and sixth grade as the competition rules required: Sarah Djomo, Arabella Arredondo, Sienna Lee and Ella Feilmeier. The other schools were public schools, charter schools and private schools, most of which had hundreds if not thousands of students in attendance, and thus they picked the four best students out of their pool of hundreds of students. The first round was a regional competition. Oak Crest Private School students won this round, beating a much larger private school and thereby became one of the six top schools selected out of the thirty-one that had started in the competition to go on to the final round at the Microsoft Center in NorthPark Mall.

On December 6, 2018, the night of the Grand Final competition, each of the six regional winning teams were asked to simultaneously work on a series of math puzzles with increasing levels of difficulty. Each group had one hour to solve the puzzles and show how they came to their conclusions while being watched by the competition's judges. Judging was based on cleverness of strategy, accuracy of answers and good team-work.

Students, parents, teachers and everyone who had come to cheer the competitors on, eagerly waited to hear what the judges would decide. Every team was acknowledged for what they had done particularly well, but to our complete delight, **Oak Crest Private School was awarded the top place out of 31 schools and announced as the winner of the competition!** The judge stated that the team had been very fast at correctly solving the first two stages of the challenge and that she was highly impressed by the mathematical strategies the team used and the speed with which they got accurate answers. She further complimented our students for their excellent teamwork and terrific camaraderie.

At Oak Crest Private School, our math program is not just about memorizing math facts and procedures. Our emphasis is on ensuring that students gain a full understanding of the underlying principles and thus can use what they have learned in life. Our goal is to teach our students to develop the ability to reason with the mathematical tools they have learned so that they can extrapolate them for new applications as they arise in the future.

Congratulations Ella, Sienna, Arabella and Sarah! We are proud of our outstanding math team!

Math at Oak Crest Private School is not like math at other schools.

Full Comprehension

We begin by carefully defining all terms, starting with the word “mathematics.” Different age groups of students are presented with definitions carefully tailored to their ability to understand. As students get older, the definitions gradually become more detailed and complete.

When a student fully grasps that “addition” means “to put together with and see how much you get,” then it is very clear that a story problem that involves two amounts being combined needs to be solved using addition. More importantly, this lays the groundwork for being able to use this skill in life. Fully understanding the terms of the subject opens the door to the ability to apply it.

Hundred Percent Mastery

When students turn in math exercises, their work is marked by the teacher. Any exercises or problems not solved correctly need to be redone until students know what their error was and have confidence that they know how to solve each question in their textbook. Therefore, by the time a student finishes a math level, they have correctly solved every single assignment and understand why it works that way.

Small Classes

Our small classes allow this kind of individualized attention that ensures that every child comprehends each step. This leaves no gap in their education that could trip them up later when the work becomes more difficult.

Memorizing Math Facts

Math facts are memorized using a computer program that times the children’s responses. Drilling begins with very simple addition facts and then progresses to higher number addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Eventually, the questions include conversions between decimals, percentages and fractions. Answers must be keyed in very rapidly and are timed by the computer. Any response that is too slow or incorrect is rejected by the program, and the student needs to continue drilling this set of math facts until it is memorized with total certainty. Certainty of basic math facts helps to speed up all future math work.

Creative Problem Solving

At the end of every math chapter, students are invited to solve a mathematical puzzle. These questions require clever strategies and excellent skills at documenting what has been tried in the process of solving the problem. Students learn about trying simpler, but similar problems, or making a table. They are taught to look for unexpected patterns in their answers or to model, draw or act out the problem to help them find a solution.

Best Young Mathematicians in DFW

Life does not present a person with a fixed list of options such as there might be on a multiple choice test. A person has to learn to think creatively and figure out solutions, and often the best ones are the ones that no one else has thought of before. This is what we aim to teach our student to do in all subjects including math. These are the skills that our students used that won them the first place in the Explore Horizons math competition.

