

Information 520

Increasing Academic Achievement and Fostering a Love for Reading:

Procurement of School Library Books

Highlands School Library, Bel Air, Maryland

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Highland School first opened in 1996 with six students; in 2007 the school relocated to a new state-of-art facility. The new building, which can serve up to 125 students, is surrounded by the picturesque farmland of Harford County, Maryland. The library is gorgeously designed allowing natural sunlight to flow through its large windows; creating a positive and welcoming environment for students. In 2007 when the school relocated to its new building they held a book fair, which allowed the school to select \$3000 in books ("Harford Award Program honors success at The Highlands School," 2010). This sizable increase in books was four years ago; the library is in desperate need of new resources.

SETTING

The Highlands School Community

Accredited by the Association of Independent Maryland Schools, The Highlands School is a non-profit, independent remedial school located in Harford County, Maryland. The Highlands School serves students who have the potential to achieve academically however they are struggling with learning differences. These differences include language processing

deficits, Dyslexia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and other learning needs. The students are taught skills and strategies that aid them in becoming successful learners. The faculty is trained in the Highlands School's unique multi-sensory educational approaches. The school incorporates Orton-Gillingham methodology and Lindamood-Bell programs into their educational curriculum.

Highlands School Mission and Programs

In 1996, The Highland School opened its doors with the missions to serve children with learning disabilities. *“Teaching students the skills and strategies needed to become successful, independent learners who are well-equipped to return to a traditional school setting.”* The philosophy of The Highlands School is, *“That a failure to learn is because a unique learning style has not yet been discovered.”* The school offers full-time school program, summer program, and tutoring services. The Community Outreach Center offers tutoring to children and adults in the areas of language, reading, spelling, vocabulary, writing, and math including organizational and study skills (“The Highlands School, Inc.,”).

The Highlands School Library

The Highlands School Library is a small library currently serving 63 students who are struggling with learning disabilities and 12 highly qualified teachers. (“The Highlands School, Inc.,”). It's a small library; all the same, it's a welcoming and encourages students' interest in reading. Since The Highlands School focuses on educating learning disabled students, the library is organized to reflect the students' needs. The “pick books”, books that students choose to read for fun are organized by reading level. Each week students, with the guidance of a reading specialist, choose a few suitable books for their reading level. The facilities

include a beautiful well-lit reading area for story telling activities and study tables for students. Each month the librarian transforms the library's displays into creative monthly educational topics, as well as arranging relevant books throughout the library. The Highlands School greatly focuses on reading therefore the library is heavily used daily.

STATEMENT OF NEED

“Existing research shows that school libraries can have a positive impact, whether measured in terms of reading scores, literacy or learning more generally, on student achievement.” (Lonsdale, 2003)

The Highland School is in the need of school library resources. The school library serves the students and teachers of The Highlands School. Since it's opening in 1996 more than 700 students have benefited from the school's educational methods. Last year the school has received the 2010 Harford Award in the non-profit category for outstanding commitment to the community ("Harford Award Program honors success at The Highlands School," 2010).

Teachers utilize library resources to promote a love for reading as well as raising reading achievement. The Highlands School's library hosts a relatively small collection, which has been supplement through community donations. The collection consists of books that have experienced wear and tear but have not been replaced due to their increasing demand. The audio-visual materials are very limited and many of them are still in VHS format. Research shows that a high-quality, print-rich environment has a positive effect on student learning. These achievements can be evaluated through an increased in reading; “free-voluntary reading is the best predictor of comprehension, vocabulary growth, grammatical ability and

writing style” (Lonsdale, 2003). Updating the collection would increase the learning opportunities and literacy of the students.

PROPOSED PROGRAM

Project Goal

With the aid of new books and other resources The Highlands School Library will be able to strengthen academic success. The proposed goals are to bring in a medley of books for student to choose, and supplementary resources for teachers. “A relevant aspect of student literacy is a measure of variety of reading. Students who have experience reading a variety of reading genres also tend to demonstrate higher reading engagement, enjoyment, and success (Klinger & Blackett, 2007).” Overall the additional books and resources will increase library use and in-turn will elicit academic personal fulfillment and success.

Required Resources

The Highlands School Library proposes to up-date its library collection by adding additional resources. These resources include fiction and non-fiction books, and teacher resources, such as teacher guides and audiovisual materials.

“Graphic novels can provide a myriad of teaching and learning opportunities for readers, educators, and researchers. As an increasingly popular format, readers will continue to select those books they want to read in their leisure time, and many of these titles will be graphic novels. Educators are observing this format as a possibility for reading motivation and learning.”(Griffith, 2010)

Since there has been an increasing demand for graphic novels The Highland School will add graphic novels to the collection. Research of this new trend shows that graphic novels are creating a hunger for reading among children. Moreover, The Highland School strives to provide a variety of books to satisfy the reading interests of all students.

Implemented Schedule

The program will be implemented over a four-month period. The first month, fiction and non-fiction books including graphic novels will be order and cataloged. The first month will also include announcing the grant award to faculty, students and parents. A letter will be sent to all parties encouraging them to checkout the new materials. This will encourage reading, which will result in an increase in library use and achievement. The second month, teacher resources, such as instructional textbooks and audiovisual materials will be ordered and cataloged. The third month, will be utilized to continue cataloging and promoting the new materials. Throughout the entire program, an evaluation of the project will be conducted. Study of the evaluations will be take place at the end of the fourth month.

Program Evaluation

The success of the program will be determined by increase interest of reading among the students, as well as a rise in library usage among students and teachers. The librarian will create evaluations surveys that will be distributed among teachers and students. Volunteers and the librarian will also record requests from teachers and students. The Highlands School library will continue to utilize a suggestion box to receive anonymous feedback from faculty and students. The overall goals of evaluation are to assess the influence of new materials on the student's achievement and confidence.

Proposed Budget

<i>Required Resources</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Books (Fiction and Non-Fiction)	\$3,000
Teacher Resources (Teacher Guides, Audio-Visual Materials)	\$2,000
<i>Total</i>	\$5,000

Conclusion

The Highlands School owes its success to the dedication of the teachers' focus on each individual child. By supplying the faculty and students with up-to-date books and supplemental resources they will be able to continue to educate and serve students. New books will boost reading interests and increase academic achievement and confidence, which will positively impact the students of The Highlands School.

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