

The Gadsden Times

100 Alabama Schools Access Educational Software With Tech Grant

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Floyd Elementary in Gadsden is one of 100 schools statewide to receive a technology grant [from the State of Alabama DOE and the Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools].

Principal Nicole Chester said since mid-November students at Floyd have been using *Kid's College* educational software bought with the grant money. The software fuses academic lessons in reading and math with online games.

After answering correctly to a teacher-prescribed series of school curriculum-based questions, students are given the option to play a game.

The students are given a password and can log on to the program at any computer system with an Internet connection.

Results are recorded and can be accessed by school personnel.

"It gives us immediate feedback," Chester said. "What's good about it is they can use it anywhere."

Twya Lavender, a resource teacher at Floyd, said the program benefits teachers and students.

"They're very excited about the program," Lavender said. "(The program) fluctuates from their grade level. If they are functioning on a third-grade level and are in the fourth grade, it adjusts to them.

"It's teaching them new skills, but reiterating the old skills they already know.

"It helps us determine the child's weaknesses and strengths," she added. "It saves us time while giving them a new, interactive way to learn."

Lavender said the students are rewarded with a game - including basketball, football, snow boarding and baseball - only after answering consecutive questions correctly.

Students get to post high scores on the system and look to beat their classmates.

"They want to answer the questions right just so they can play the game," she said.

Chester said pupils logged in with their parents during a Parent Teacher Organization meeting Wednesday night.

"They are learning while they are having fun," she said. "A lot of (the parents) said how can I get my older kids involved."

She said the program also is being used in the after-school program.

Lana Bellew, Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools academic coach, said the program helps improve math and reading scores.

"It's catching them up and gets them on grade level," said Bellew, who works with the state Department of Education.

She added in an e-mail, "We are thrilled that the program is doing so well at Floyd."

<http://www.gadsdentimes.com/article/20080128/NEWS/801280304>