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## The Sentinel Record

Local schools place first in stock market competition  
by John Anderson The Sentinel-Record | May 11, 2020 at 4:00 a.m.

Cutter Morning Star Junior High School and the Arkansas School for the Mathematics, Sciences, and the Arts took first place in their respective divisions recently in the Stock Market Game investment simulation competition.

Nancy Anderson, Cutter Morning Star superintendent, said she is proud of the junior high receiving first place in the game. Cutter won first place for Region 2 in the Junior High division for Spring 2020.

ASMSA won first place in the After School division both for Spring 2020 and for 2019-20 Year-long Winners categories.

The students research different stocks and invest in the stock market using simulated money, Anderson said.

"With everything going on with the presidential election and the pandemic, the stock market has been very unstable in the last few months. I'm proud that our students did great research to pick stocks that they were able to show profits on," Anderson said.

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The students "worked very hard and did a lot of research and invested their money wisely. Even though it was hard for professionals at this time in history to pick good stocks with the stock market being so inconsistent," she said.

Carl Frank, an ASMSA computer science instructor, said the school's economics class includes the Stock Market Game as a class activity to help meet state standards for economics and personal finance. ASMSA always advertises and makes the contest available to the students, as many have participated in the Stock Market Game at their home school prior to attending ASMSA.

"Our economics students compete in the divisions for classes, and everyone else competes in the after school division. I share resources with the students playing, but they do the research and do the stock and bond trading on their own," he said.

"The students who are in the ASMSA after school program self-select, and form their teams, then I register the team. The ASMSA teams who are participating as a part of a class may self-select teams, or may be assigned by the teacher," Frank said.

Breann Johnston, a CMS seventh- and eighth-grade teacher, said the game goes on the same numbers as the stock market does. The price per share will be continuously updated, in real-time, so the students can buy and sell stocks as if it was the real market. It's a 12-week program, and it keeps up with the real market.

"The kids start with a virtual \$100,000. They can invest all of that, or they can invest some of it, whatever they want to do. Then, that money grows or decreases, just like with the market," she said.

Anderson said she is very thankful for Johnston. This was Johnston's first year to take on the project.

"She did a very good job of making sure that (the students) were doing proper research and looking at the facts and watching the trend data on all the stocks that they were selecting, so they can make good educated and informed decisions on where to invest their money," she said.

Frank said that each team may consist of one to five students. The cost for each team to participate is \$15 for the fall and spring contest and \$30 for the yearlong contest. There are scholarships and funding resources available through Economics Arkansas, which is the Arkansas host and sponsor for the Stock Market Game in Arkansas.

Johnston said she had around six teams with three to four students that competed in the game, noting the selection committee gives prizes for the first top two teams in the regions. In the fall, Johnston had the top two teams in the region for junior high. Each member of the team gets their portion of \$125 split three ways, and the second-place team will get their share of \$75 split three ways.

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"I had the top three in the region, but they only give prizes for the top two," she said.

Frank said the state is divided into regions, and the top two teams in each region are recognized at an awards luncheon and given a monetary prize to be shared by the team members.

"In recent years, they have added an After School division. This seems to be an attempt to expand the recognition to include some teams that are not actively competing in the stock market game as a part of one of their classes," he said.

"I am always proud of my students who do this competition, as they are normally doing this extra activity, on their time. Predicting success in the stock market is difficult, so I am proud even if they are not among those recognized at the end of the year," Frank said.

"We often do have students do well, but I had other student teams who were active that did not do as well, but this year the yearlong and spring had extra turbulence particularly in recent weeks due to the COVID-19 pandemic. So beating the market, or even just showing a profit, is a great accomplishment," he said.

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