

JCPS Elementary Academic Competition



Parent Information Booklet 2008-2009



Janet Morris, Coordinator of Academic Competition
Activities/Athletics
Jerry Wyman, Director

Visit us online at <http://apps.jefferson.k12.ky.us/academiccompetition/>

ELEMENTARY ACADEMIC COMPETITION

Jefferson County Public Schools

Dear Parents:

Applause! Applause! Thank you! You are our support system, our chauffeurs, our cooks and our cheerleaders. You are the foundation on which we build our learning environment. We appreciate you and welcome you to take an active role in our program of academic competition.

JCPS is proud to sponsor an organized program of academic competition for students in all Jefferson County Public Elementary Schools. This program emphasizes the use of teamwork; higher-level thinking skills; creative and critical problem-solving skills; procurement of factual knowledge; and independent learning.

Elementary academic competition involves, but is not limited to, the Jefferson County Mayor's Cup, including quick recall and problem solving; and the JCPS Quick Recall League. The competitions are coordinated by the JCPS Office of Academic Competition in the Department of Activities/Athletics. For schedules, scores, and info, visit us online at:
<http://apps.jefferson.k12.ky.us/academiccompetition/>.

One purpose of quick recall (and other academic competitions) is to deliver a message to our students - the message that our society values academic achievement and intellectual ability as much as it values athletic ability and achievement. We know that the key to successfully educating our children is to motivate them to do well in school. Academic competition helps provide that motivation for students to do well both in the classroom and in independent learning.

We solicit your help in providing refreshments and transportation, and donating or raising money for shirts and awards. We encourage you to work with your child at home so that he or she is prepared when coming to practice.

Students are encouraged to try out for the academic team, just as they would an athletic team. There are several types of competition and all participating students are members of the team. All members of the team are winners when the "team" wins. Your school will have tryouts and the best players will be selected. These students will learn and use the rules set forth and agreed upon by all of the elementary schools involved in the competition. Each school uses a different selection process and the decisions about members of the team are made at the local school.

Thank you for supporting academic Competition!

Sincerely,
Janet M. Morris
Coordinator of Academic Competition
Jefferson County Public Schools

JEFFERSON COUNTY MAYOR'S CUP

WHAT IS IT?

Mayor's Cup is an organized academic competition sponsored by the Mayor's Office for elementary students in Jefferson County Public Schools. There are eight events including six individual written assessments and two team activities.



- Language Arts Test
- Science Test
- Social Studies Test
- Mathematics Test
- Fine Arts/Humanities Test
- English Composition
- Problem Solving Team
- Quick Recall Team

WHEN IS IT?

The written assessment tests are held on a Monday at least a week prior to the Mayor's Cup Saturday in March. Problem solving and quick recall are held on the second or third Saturday in March. This may vary from year to year depending on the school calendar.

WHO RUNS IT?

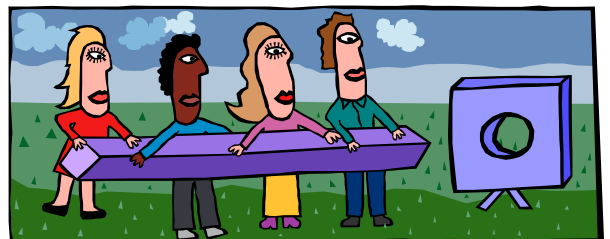
Janet Morris, Coordinator
Carolyn Brunson, Secretary
Office of Academic Competition
Jefferson County Public Schools
485-3492

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Any student legally and continuously enrolled in the participating school is eligible to represent that school. Students through grade five may compete. Each school is responsible for selecting and training its team.

PROBLEM SOLVING IN THE CLASSROOM AND IN COMPETITION

The problem solving component of the Jefferson County Mayor's Cup is a team activity that helps children learn to think. It teaches children to examine their own problems and the problems of the world, both critically and creatively. It provides children with strategies for facing everyday problems, individually and collectively. It teaches children how to think about the world in constructive ways; how to analyze situations; and how to focus on and explore potential alternatives to problems.



As members of a problem solving team, students learn to work together in an ever-changing environment. This activity gives them practice in compromise, in sharing, and in defining and refining ideas. It involves gathering and sharing information; brainstorming ideas; defining a specific problem that, if

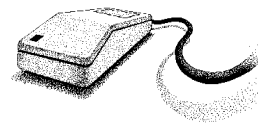
solved, may lead to the solution of other problems; brainstorming alternatives, defining criteria for evaluating the alternatives, selecting a solution and describing that solution so that others understand.

The Problem Solving process helps students improve their research skills; improve their thinking skills, both creative and critical; and increase their communication skills, both verbal and written. It helps students learn to function more effectively as a member of a team. It also guides students to become more self-directed and responsible, not only as individuals, but as members of a group and as members of society.

The Jefferson County Mayor's Cup Problem Solving competition is a combination of written pieces and an oral presentation. Early in the year, students are given a broad topic. They do research on this broad topic. In the competition, students are given a more specific situation, called a scenario, which focuses on the broad topic.

In the actual competition, students must determine the main problem, write a problem statement with a purpose, brainstorm alternatives, evaluate the alternatives, complete a criteria chart, determine the best solution, write a solution, and create a visual and oral presentation to be performed before an audience.

Problem Solving involves a team of no less than four and no more than ten students, including students who help with artwork and props. The students have one hour, fifteen minutes to complete their preparation and write and rehearse a presentation of the problem and solution in a creative way. They have 3-7 minutes to perform. No part of the presentation may be prepared in advance. At least 4 students must take part in the presentation, but it is not required that all team members appear in the presentation.



While creativity and humor is encouraged in the presentation, the purpose of this activity is to emphasize higher-level thinking skills. Students are judged on good content, good problem analysis (defining the problem), convincing solutions to the specific problem they have defined, and effective presentation of the problem and solution.

In preparation for problem solving competition, students must research the topic and be prepared to state research relevant to the problem. Research should be current. While the process for problem solving in the classroom may be used with past, present and future material, all competition prompts deal with current or futuristic subjects.

QUICK RECALL LEAGUE

The Jefferson County elementary quick recall league is an organized program of *practice* matches in which schools compete against a team from another school. The league is played in January and February. Schools play 3-4 league matches in preparation for Mayor's Cup. The schedule is posted on the JCPS Academic Competition website at <http://apps.jefferson.k12.ky.us/academiccompetition/>. Match schedules and scores are listed on the 'schedule' link on the 'Elementary' tab. However, the dates provided on the schedule are only suggested. We allow coaches to set alternate dates/times when there is a conflict. Please contact your coach to find out the exact dates and times of matches.

QUICK RECALL

Quick recall is a game similar to TV's "Jeopardy" in that students use buzzers to ring in and answer questions. However, the rules are somewhat different. For instance, in quick recall, students play as a team. It helps students learn "fact knowledge" in a fun and challenging way and promotes learning

both in the classroom and in independent study. It requires thinking on your feet, a skill necessary in a fast-paced world.

Quick recall helps students solve math problems quickly and efficiently. It helps them learn and define terms, label and match facts, and organize information sequentially and quickly when they have to make critical decisions. It promotes awareness of scientific data and gives students a better understanding of self and the physical world. Quick recall fosters knowledge of history, economics, geography and current events. It also helps students develop a greater appreciation for literature, fine arts, and their cultural and historical heritage.

In addition to helping students learn facts, quick recall helps students develop the ability to articulate knowledge; work in groups; improve listening skills; and develop poise and self-confidence. Students are challenged to explore new material and investigate learning beyond the classroom, both as individuals, and as members of an academic team.

Quick recall is a timed, team game with four students competing against another team of four students by responding to short-answer questions in social studies, mathematics, language arts, science, and fine arts/humanities. It promotes the learning of facts and is one of the team events of the academic competition program.

To view quick recall rules, go to the Academic Competition website. (<http://apps.jefferson.k12.ky.us/academiccompetition/>) Under the elementary tab, there is a sidebar menu item called "Manuals." You can choose to volunteer to help at quick recall practices as well. There are training sessions to learn the quick recall rules given early in the school year that you may attend if you would like to assist the coach. Those dates and times are also listed on our website.

WRITTEN ASSESSMENTS

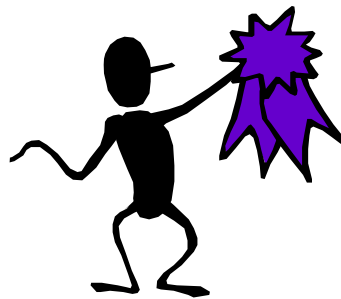
Another portion of Mayor's Cup is the written assessment testing in math, science, social studies, language arts, and fine arts/humanities. These are challenging multiple-choice tests that students prepare for throughout the quick recall season. It is an honor for your child to be selected as one of the three students to represent his/her school in a given subject area. These tests are scored, and the results are used to assign points to teams competing at Mayor's Cup. Students from each school also participate in composition writing. Students who score the highest on these tests are given awards at the Mayor's Cup awards ceremony.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Parental support is vital to this program of academic competition. How can YOU help make academic competition a positive experience for your child?

- Know the rules.
- Encourage good sportsmanship!
- Learn the criteria for selection of the team at your school.
- Help your child study at home.
- Come to practices and league matches.
- Volunteer to act as a proctor for written testing.
- Volunteer to be a quick recall scorekeeper, judge, or moderator. (Some training is required for judges and moderators.)
- REMEMBER! The coaches are volunteers. They need your support and help.
- Remain SILENT during quick recall matches or problem- solving presentations. The audience may not mouth answers to the questions in quick recall.
- Set priorities! Find out the dates and times for competition and practice and be sure that your child maintains good attendance. When conflicts occur, let the coach know ahead of time.
- Provide refreshments for competitions and practices.
- Help raise money for extra equipment and practice questions.
- Help make copies of material for study or practice.
- Work with students to do research for problem solving.
- This is a learning experience and should be treated as such, but have fun and encourage your student to have fun!

Thank you for supporting your school's academic competition program!



Here's to you!