

WCATY Programs

District Cooperative Program:

This innovative program has cooperation with Wisconsin's school districts at its core. By bringing students together across district lines, we are able to offer advanced courses, combining on-line and face-to-face instruction, when single schools lack the resources—or critical mass of gifted students—to teach independently. Co-ops are interdisciplinary, standards-based courses designed for students whose needs are difficult to meet within their grade-level classrooms. During the 2004-2005 school year WCATY worked with 513 students through our District Cooperative Online program; up 77.5 percent from a year earlier.

Young Scholar Program:

This mentor guided, independent study program provides grants to students to pursue projects of their own design. Seventh and eighth graders work with an expert on an in-depth study in an area of student interest. Students write grant proposals and those receiving the awards receive \$500 stipends to develop their projects; part of the awards go to the mentors who work with the students individually. In 2005, 26 students received young scholar grants, up from 15 students in 2004.

Accelerated Learning Program:

The Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) is a three-week program for mature eighth, and ninth through twelfth grade students, which is moving to St. Norbert College in De Pere, Wis. Eighth graders can apply if they demonstrate strict adherence to all academic qualifications and the maturity to be successful in an intensive academic and social environment. Courses are the equivalent of a yearlong honors course or a semester-long college course. AP courses are offered for students interested in earning college credit. Classes are small—no more than 16 students with an eight-to-one student-to-instructor ratio. Students receive transcripts from their instructors that include recommendations for appropriate high school credit and placement, as well as a final grade. It is up to the student's regular schools to make the decision to offer credit for ALP courses.

Summer Transitional Enrichment Program:

The Summer Transitional Enrichment Program (STEP) is a two-week learning opportunity for students in seventh and eighth grades, currently held on the Edgewood College campus in Madison, Wis. WCATY believes that students in the middle grades need to learn about themselves as learners and as individuals. STEP classes are designed to enrich, accelerate and inspire. Instructors structure class activities to appeal to various learning styles and the long class periods give students the opportunity to concentrate on one area of interest. Residential activities enhance the classroom activities by providing time for students to interact with peers in a relaxed setting with an emphasis on leadership and personal growth. Instructors at STEP use a variety of assessment techniques, including observation and written quizzes. Grades are not given and students do not receive school credit for STEP courses.

Young Students Summer Program:

The Young Students Summer Program (YSSP) is a one-week residential experience for third through sixth graders. This program is the first in the WCATY sequence and is often the first time away from home for an extended period for participants. Beloit College in Beloit, Wis., has hosted this program since its inception in 1993. Classes are fast-paced and cover a great amount

of material. For many participants it is the first time they find others their age with similar interests and learning abilities. YSSP is designed to help students expand their knowledge in one content area while concurrently learning how to learn and study in a challenging academic environment. Student skills are assessed using a variety of techniques and written reports. In addition, meetings with instructors emphasize matching future learning opportunities to students' characteristics. Students live in "families" of 10-14 students with the residential assistants, who guide them through a wide range of planned afternoon and evening activities.

Career & College Planning & Exploration Program:

This week-long residential program helps students in grades 8-11 take an in-depth look at their aptitudes, interests and personality and apply that knowledge to career choices, college majors and preparation for entrance into the colleges that match their career goals. The program, which is held at the Milwaukee School of Engineering in Milwaukee, Wis., focuses on the unique needs of gifted students as they plan for life after high school.

Children of Promise:

This is a cooperative program with inner-city schools designed to deepen WCATY's impact in threatened urban neighborhoods. Through this program, WCATY offers a support staff, enrollment in Talent Search and financial aid for students to attend a summer WCATY program. Expansion will come as WCATY develops the resources to do so.

Harlan O. Roberson Poetry Competition:

Made possible through a gift from Linda Roberson, in memory of her father, Harlan O. Roberson, WCATY partners with the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters for the Poetry Competition. The poetry competition recognizes, honors and supports young, talented Wisconsin writers in grades 9-12. The more the reader can embrace the emotions, locations or objects being described, the more powerful the poem. Accomplished and published poets judge the entries.

Educator Recognition Program & Excellent Educator Institute:

This program enables WCATY students to nominate educational professionals who have made significant differences in their lives for a WCATY Excellent Educator Award. Since 1991, WCATY has recognized more than 500 Wisconsin educators for their outstanding contributions to gifted education. Instructors nominated through the Educator Recognition Program have the opportunity to apply to the Excellent Educator Institute. The Institute is held in conjunction with the Accelerated Learning Program. This four-day Institute enables teachers and other educational professionals to meet with national experts in the area of gifted and talented education, observe fast-paced ALP classes, interact with the students and staff, and take back cutting-edge techniques and materials to their local school districts.

WCATY Awards Program:

Academically talented students need positive reinforcement of their talents to stay on track and continue to develop their talents. WCATY recognizes this need and, as a result, honors the top 10 percent of Midwest Academic Talent Search (MATS) test-takers statewide who represent the top ½ of 1 percent of all students at their grade level nationwide. Students receive certificates of achievement, with the highest scorers on each test—the ACT, SAT and EXPLORE—also receiving a scholarship to a WCATY residential academic summer program.

For more information, contact WCATY at:
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