

Richland, Pfaff tops in Math 24 tourney

Richland earned the team crown while Pfaff students finished one-two-three overall in the challenging tournament.

By Gary Weckselblatt

His friends call him calculator, so it can be no surprise that Sean Egan, a fifth grader at Pfaff Elementary School, captured the individual championship in Tuesday night's 4th Annual QCSD Math 24 Tournament.

"It was nerve racking, but I had a lot of fun," Sean said after the competition, which included four grueling rounds that lasted nearly 90 minutes.



Taylor Kletzing of Pfaff finished second overall in the tourney.

His Pfaff teammates, fifth grader Taylor Kletzing and fourth grader Shawn Zhu, finished second and third, respectively. Taylor and Shawn tied in the final round, a first in QCSD tournament history. Taylor gained second on her cumulative score, Leah Schwalm of Richland, a fifth grader, took fourth. Her points helped boost Richland to the team title. Pfaff finished second and Tohickon Valley third.

"It was a very intense 90 minutes of computational competitiveness," said Greg Leshner, the district's STEM supervisor and tournament facilitator. "I'm always impressed by the focus and speed in which many of our students were operating under. I don't know about the other adults, but I was nervous for them."



Greg Leshner, QCSD's STEM supervisor, congratulates Sean Egan of Pfaff Elementary, champion of the district's Math 24 Tournament.

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Richland fifth-grade teacher and Math 24 coach Mike Huber hands out medals to his smiling students after they captured the district crown.



Shawn Zhu of Pfaff ponders the answer as Lori Pierce of Quakertown Elementary monitors the table. Shawn finished third overall.

MATH 24

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Math 24 is a game that helps students sharpen basic math skills such as computation, problem solving, number sense, critical thinking, and pattern sensing, Lesher said. Students practice during their recess period and at home to strengthen their abilities.

In February, each QCSD elementary school held a building-wide competition to identify the top eight students to qualify for the district competition.

The first two rounds Tuesday night were used to identify the winning school and the top 16 students, who advanced the semifinal round.

The top four scores from the semifinal round made it to the finals. Sean was the highest scorer in the final round.

Jason Erk, Pfaff's math specialist and Math 24 coach, said having his students achieve the one-two-three finish was "overwhelming and exciting."

Richland fifth-grade teachers Mike Huber



Pfaff students Sean Egan and Shawn Zhu listen to instructions.

and Tammy Thompson said their students showed a lot of dedication during practice time. The teachers held two practices each week, one volunteer and one mandatory. Students regularly showed up for each, they said.



With parents looking on in the background, a table of students compete under the guidance of Tohickon Valley's Lauren Zeigler.

"They're hooked on the game, and they worked really hard," Huber said.

Lesher made a point during the evening's announcements to thank the teachers for their "dedication" in preparing students for the important event. He also gave a shout out to high school assistant principal Jason Magditch and high school custodians for their "speedy and meticulous set-up" in the high school auxiliary gymnasium, where the event was held.

Several QCSD students qualified for the countywide competition on Saturday, May 12, at Churchville Elementary School in Southampton. They include:

Ben Arkans, Ayden Formica, Matt Hudson and Madison Zepp of Neidig; Nathan Bezilia, Sean Egan, Taylor Kletzing and Shawn Zhu of Pfaff; Autumn Kovacs, Macayla Ladzenski and Evelyn Moyer of Quakertown; Madison Boyd and Leah Schwalm of Richland; Jonathan Babb, Tyler Cole, Max Drews and Owen Reinford of Tohickon Valley; and Matthew Burger and Brendan Forman of Trumbauersville.

Gary Weckselblatt, QCSD Director of Communications, writes about the people and the programs that impact the Quakertown Community School District. He can be reached at 215-529-2028 or gweckselblatt@qcsd.org.



Azure Spigelmyer of Tohickon Valley leans in to see the numbers. Below, students consider the math problem.



Jenn Fronshour of Richland, at right, with STEM supervisor Greg Lesher, tabulates the scores. At left, Richland's Mike Huber works with students.

