

Game Builders Academy

Press Release



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Westbury Schools Introduce Innovative Technology-Based Education to Special Elementary Students

Westbury, NY, December 11, 2008 – Westbury Public Schools has taken additional steps in introducing some innovative teaching techniques in its elementary school curriculum to help students retain and appreciate the value of academic basics like science, math, engineering and technology. Two special programs currently underway in this Long Island school district may determine how teachers and special students alike may experience education in the coming years.



At the Drexel Avenue School in Westbury, a class of 5th graders, comprised of students from both the Gifted and Talented Program and the Special Education Program, recently began a ten-week fall program in Robotics. Once a week for two hours, these 24 students, working in teams of two, design, build and program their own LEGO robots from scratch. The students apply their mathematics, engineering and technology skills in an educational and enjoyable manner. In early observation, the effects of matching a student from the Gifted Program together with a student from the Special Ed program have been extremely positive and encouraging.



At the same time at Westbury's Powell's Lane School, a group of twelve 4th graders from the Special Ed Program have been applying their basic math, science, literacy, art and technology skills – as well as logical and critical thinking skills – all while doing something they enjoy: *creating their own video games*. Students are learning, applying what they learn, and having fun doing it.

The concept for instituting both of these programs originated from Dr. Marjorie Toran, the Director of Special Education and Special Services for the Westbury School District. Working with Game Builders Academy after a very successful first year at Westbury Public Schools, Dr. Toran decided to take innovation a step further by including both groups of students working together in building robots, while also introducing video game design and development to Special Education students.



Reports indicate that schools are, more and more, thinking about alternative ways of teaching and engaging kids. It is suggested that computer and video games have the potential to increase student

engagement in science and engineering, as well as teach important concepts. Robotics programs make it possible for the students to practice and learn many necessary skills, like collaboration, cognitive skills, self-confidence, perception, and spatial understanding.

About Game Builders Academy

Headquartered in Westbury, New York, Game Builders Academy (GBA) is a STEM-based educational services and products provider of innovative, technology-based instruction – primarily for students in grades 5 through 12 – that help students learn, grow, have fun and succeed! GBA's initial instructional programs have been based on video game design and development, and robotics. A GBA *Starburst*™ offering in video game development was specifically designed for early childhood students in grades K through 4. Additional new programs are continually in development for future release. GBA's clients include public and private schools, college-based youth programs, as well as summer academic camps. Its programs have been integrated within regular daytime school curricula, after-school and weekend programs, and summer youth activities.



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