Inside Bingham

Who said learning isn't fun? Here at Bingham Elementary School, they offer exciting activities for the children with an educational twist. Students who attend the school get a great education and access to programs they normally wouldn't be able to participate in.

The children at Bingham come from all social and ethnic backgrounds. The majority comes from low-income families and their parents usually do not have a high education level. Therefore, both parents must work to support their families and, in turn, lose quality time they could spend with their child. Many of the children don't learn from their parents how valuable their education is and take it for granted. Currently, one hundred and sixty five students attend Bingham and one hundred and forty two students are considered at risk, meaning their parents have a low income. With statistics like this, Bingham makes it a priority to make learning fun for the students.

Many of the exciting programs at Bingham are made possible by funding from the 21st Century Grant. The most popular program offered is Club Excel, a before and after school daycare center for the children. It provides a safe place for kids to do homework or play games while their parents are at work. At only five dollars a month, the program is affordable for all families. Other activities at Bingham include a wide range of sports for boys and girls, Cub Scouts and Girl Scouts, Big Brothers-Big Sisters, and even special support groups, life skills, mentoring, and tutoring for the children. Since many students have below average reading levels, Bingham also offers educational programs for the children who need extra help. These programs include Read to Succeed, Accelerated Reader, and America Reads. Accelerated Reader is popular among the students; they get to read a book of their choice and then take a test on the computer to see how well they understood the material. This program helps greatly in improving the child’s comprehension and reading skills.

Bingham Elementary School has a very helpful and caring staff who try to make learning easier for the children. Among the staff are two specialty teachers, one in science and the other in reading. These individuals have in-depth backgrounds in the subjects they teach and meet with each class once a week. When a class meets with a specialty teacher they get a hands-on experience and a better understanding of
the information. The results on last year’s state-wide MEAP tests show the specialty teachers made a difference in the learning of the children. During the 1999-2000 school year, ninety-three percent of the students scored proficiently in the science area.

A big part of Bingham’s success is due to the number of Community Partnerships they have. Many of the surrounding businesses care about the students at Bingham and show their support in unique ways. One example is Old Kent Bank, which allows the children to take on the responsibility of running a simulated bank. The students take on the roles necessary for a bank to operate. Every week, students have the chance to invest their money in a savings account and at the end of the year they collect the interest they have earned. Other major organizations which provide activities for the children are Pilgrim Congregational Church, Sparrow Hospital, General Motors, and Michigan State University.

All the programs at Bingham are designed with the children in mind. The number of students who participate illustrates that the children want to be involved and enjoy the programs. This clearly shows Bingham has achieved their goal of making learning fun, and will continue inventing new ways to teach the children.

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During the Spring semester of 2001, this work for Bingham Elementary School was completed by Michigan State University student Michelle Spica for her ATL135 class. Everything was posted under the supervision of her Professor, John A. Dowell, as well as Community Activities Coordinator for Bingham Elementary School, Amy Lantis.