



Winder-Barrow High School

272 North Fifth Avenue

Winder, GA 30680

770-867-4519

770-867-6412 fax

Rob Johnson

Principal

Jeff Beggs

Assistant Principal, Operations

Athletic Director

Molly Stiltner

Assistant Principal, Attendance

Susan Wages

Assistant Principal, Instruction

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Governor Perdue,

I am a 25-year veteran of Mathematics Education Georgia. Winder-Barrow High School has found the solution to many of the Mathematics problems for the State of Georgia, and I would like to share them with you.

Zell Miller set aside money from the lottery for each Congressional district to write a grant and receive a Learning Logic System. Learning Logic is a computer based Algebra I course created by the National Science Center Foundation in Augusta, Georgia. The students move ideally at their own pace through an Algebra I course on the computer. They must master all objectives at an 80% level (unless otherwise instructed by the teacher). This program takes a little longer to complete than a traditional class, but the students know the material when they leave.

As you know Algebra I is the foundation of higher level Mathematics, and students without that good foundation are unable to reach their potential in Mathematics and therefore think they cannot learn Mathematics. The administration at Barrow County Schools understands the importance of this foundation and has allowed us to create a very impressive Mathematics program by using the flexibility of the Learning Logic Program.

We have extended hours for students to get ahead for extra credit or catch up with their work when they are absent. I am here on Saturday to allow a group of students to take advantage of extra time. We also use it as our extension in the summer for Algebra I and the Applied Algebra for those students who barely failed their Algebra class. Using the program in this way keeps students on track and gives them an opportunity to be successful.

The failure rate in a traditional Algebra I class is between 30% and 50%. Our failure rate has been around 10% to 20% for many years. In the school year 2000-2001 all students taking advantage of the extended time in the summer passed Algebra I.

The success of this program would not be possible without the continued support of the administration both at the county level and at the school level.

I would like to invite you, Kathy Cox and Mark Taylor to come visit this wonderful program here at Winder-Barrow High School. Mark Taylor is familiar with the program. He helped obtain the program for Fulton County at Milton High School. Unfortunately, during renovation at that school all the computers were damaged and the program was eliminated at Milton. I am very excited about Kathy Cox as the new superintendent of schools. I think she will really have an understanding of the real situation in the classroom. So I would like to offer all of you a chance the see the program in action.

The reviews of this program are not always positive from some parents. As you know, we only hear from the parents whose students are not being successful. Usually these students are those not willing to work (and would be unsuccessful in any Algebra I class) or are those students not ready for Algebra I (there is not guarantee of Algebra I readiness.)

For the ones not willing to work hard enough, we can only offer more time and encouragement. For those who are not ready for Algebra I we are able to change the sequences for Topics on Learning Logic and allow them an opportunity to be successful in a Pre-Algebra course without changing their schedules. Often one more year of maturity will help them grasp the abstract objectives in Algebra during the next school year.

Our school system is a growing system and it is hard to keep up with growth here just like other schools. We are on the 4X4 block schedule. We often have students transfer in from schools not on the block. When they do, it would not be possible to put them in a traditional class because they would be so far behind. However, in the Learning Logic lab, we can give them a placement test, verify objectives they do know and put them where they can be successful, not only now but when they reach Algebra II. If they are far behind, it is up to them to take advantage of the extended lab hours to catch up. but at least they have a chance to pass the class. We also have a shortage of Pre-Algebra classes due to new enrollees and being at the maximum class size at the beginning of school; the counselors are now putting all Pre-Algebra transferees in the Learning Logic Lab because there are not other options and Learning Logic allows them to complete the Pre-Algebra course.

Since January we have used the program in many new ways. For the first time, we have the room to allow the students from first semester who did not pass to come back to the lab and retake the first part of the course (some of them are doing so well they may be able to finish the entire course in one semester.) They decided to get serious. We have also had several students in Pre-Algebra classes and Applied Algebra that indicated the material was too easy, so we gave them a chance to take the placement test in the Lab and decide which class they were really ready for. It has been an eye opener for them and changed their attitude in the class they ended up in.

We also have a student interested in a career in the movies and has had a chance to go to LA, California and seek her fortune. She has had to drop out of her other classes except Math and Drama. I called the National Science Center Foundation and explained the student's situation and asked for suggestions. They told me they were working on Internet use of Learning Logic and would let her be one of the students to try it first. So she is taking her Algebra class at her own time from California. When she returns to Georgia, I will assess her mastery of the objectives and make sure she has covered all of the Georgia objectives so she can receive credit for Algebra I and not be behind a year.

If the flexibility of the lab is used the fullest extent, it can solve a multitude of problems in Mathematics setting at the high school level. It seems only my imagination limits the uses of this program. Every time I call NSCF with a wild idea, they say, "Oh we can do that," and they can.

The creators of Learning Logic, the National Science Center Foundation, are presently working on End Of Course Test reviews for Biology, ESOL program, and Mathematics pretests from surrounding businesses (to determine eligibility to be hired in a specific company). They constantly update their material.

One of the most wonderful things about LL is that if you have a problem with the system, you can dial "1-800-callDan" and he can talk you through many problems which might occur. If the problem is hardware, he will tell you how to fix it and if it is a software problem he can dial in on the modem and fix it himself. The lab is almost never down. We do not have to wait for the system's Technology Support Team, which sometimes takes months.

Please come see the lab and the wonderful opportunities offered by this exceptional program. Call ahead, e-mail me, or just show up at the door, we will adjust to whatever fits your schedule.

This program is too valuable for the state not to consider making it available to more school systems. Please look into its use in many school settings.

Thank you for your time and your interest in the Mathematics education of the children of Georgia.

Sincerely,

J. March Hall

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(770) 867-4519

mhall@barrow.k12.ga.us