



An Educational Program that's a Game!

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BridgeAtSchools, Inc.

Giving Youth a Hand for the Future

An Educational Program that's a Game!



2002

A Program that "Trumps" all others...

- *An innovative program that develops problem solving skills, math skills and social skills*
- *A life long opportunity for participants*
- *An opportunity for children to be involved with adult mentors and their local community*

Background

Our Mission

BridgeAtSchools, Inc. is a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit organization dedicated to improving children’s education and strengthening communities using the game of bridge. We believe that all children deserve the opportunity to learn in a fun and supportive environment throughout their life time and to connect to their communities in ways that provide life-long opportunities for personal growth. By leveraging the unique qualities of bridge as a school curriculum and with the support of the bridge community at local tournaments and clubs, children can be motivated to achieve their social, emotional, and intellectual potential.



What do we do?

BridgeAtSchools offers a unique program that takes the National Educational Standards for Math and Critical thinking and incorporates them into a bridge curriculum. The curriculum is written such that any certified teacher, even if unfamiliar with bridge, can teach the basics of the game and clearly recognize the connections to the national educational standards that are reinforced in each lesson. Throughout the curriculum, the personal development of children’s social skills is reinforced as they learn to work with their partner, their team and with the community, in the classroom and beyond.

BridgeAtSchools’ goal is to research the benefits of bridge in the classroom and youth development. Pre- and Post assessments of children’s math and critical thinking will provide invaluable data for educators and for the bridge community alike.

How does the Bridge Community Help?

The bridge community is invaluable to our program by providing donations and contacts with schools and corporate donors. In addition, they become mentors to the children and to the teachers who are using the curriculum in the classroom. They provide answers and assistance throughout the project.

Constructive Use of Time	Bridge is a creative activity which also provides educational opportunities Children are able to play bridge in local clubs and tournaments and at home.
Commitment to Learning	Children are motivated to play games without knowing they are educational as well! Children engaged in tournaments can also be motivated to compete.
Positive Values	Children have a unique opportunity to defend their rationale and to defend ethics and morality at the table in a calm non-confrontational way.
Social Competencies	Children quickly learn that it is their own ability and not others perceptions that help them to succeed in the game of bridge.
Positive Identity	It is easy for children to actively engage in their skills regardless of the level, which provides a sense of a purpose for everyone involved.

Critical Thinking Skills <small>(National Council for Excellence in Critical Thinking)</small>	How does Bridge meet the Standards?
Clarity	Players must often make difficult choices during the bidding and play to clarify their holding to partner.
Accuracy	A player is instantly rewarded for good thought processes. If a line of play fails, they can review their rationale and determine what was correct based on their factual assessment.
Precision	Bridge players are faced with the complexities of bidding and ensuring that their partners have the most precise information that they are able to give them about their hand.
Relevance	Students must show that the statement is relevant to the play of the hand or prove that it is not.
Depth	Questions cause players to think more carefully and analyze the problem down to their root.
Breadth	Bridge play problems can sometimes be solved in different ways and each way can be tested.
Logic	Bridge forces a player to constantly reevaluate and reassess how to maximize their partnership’s assets.

How does Bridge meet the National Standards?

Mathematics Standards <small>(National Council of Teachers of Mathematics)</small>	How Bridge Meets The Standard
Numbers and Operations	Students incorporate multiple evaluation methods to assess their hand's value along with their partner's and how to weigh these approaches.
Algebra	Players reason from the bidding and play and visualize what they can accomplish with the help of their partner.
Data Analysis and Probability	Students confront situations which require them to assess the probability of certain outcomes and <u>make decisions accordingly.</u>
Problem Solving	Each hand amounts to a set of problems that must be evaluated and re-evaluated in the span of a few minutes.
Reasoning and Proof	Any player who can take the remaining tricks so states in the form of a proof. Flaws in the proof can result in automatic scoring adjustments.
Communications	Questions and reasoning arise during bidding and play which require clear and complete explanation. Partnerships must also agree to non-verbal cues admissible by the rules.
Representation	Bridge hands can be communicated on paper using a universally-accepted set of symbols.
Social Skills <small>(Social Skills Asset Inventory/Search Institute)</small>	How does Bridge meet the standards?
Support	Children who play bridge will have the opportunity to be mentored by bridge volunteers and those children who play in tournaments or their local clubs will form many adult relationships
Empowerment	Bridge provides a safe alternative to other activities children may choose and continues to provide this throughout a person's lifetime
Boundaries and Expectations	Duplicate bridge is a game of rules! Consequences of your own play behavior as well as management of your emotional behavior are clearly stated.

How does a research program get started?

- As a new not-for-profit organization, we depend heavily on individual donations and seed grants from bridge affiliates in order to recruit schools for the study and to provide initial bridge supplies and educational materials to get the program started there. Once a program is underway, BridgeAtSchools can apply for research grants to fund other program costs.
- Schools that can budget the start-up bridge supplies and are able to download and print lesson plans from our website are also a great match for our research program. For a class of 20 students, the cost of the bridge supplies is less than \$400.
- If you know a school contact, please tell them about us and ask if the school already has special funding to support a research program.
- In many cases the PTA plays a major role in introducing new programs in a school. If you know a PTA member, please see if they would be interested in talking to school administration about start-up funding for a program that will enable parents and children to engage in a lifelong learning opportunity together and connect to their community.
- Our bridge curriculum is designed for regular staffed teachers who may not know bridge. Our research study needs non-bridge playing teachers who are willing to teach something new, exciting, and fun.

Why is Bridge Right for your School?

In the US, demand is greater than ever for high-quality youth development programs. We are pleased to offer a creative, entertaining, and sound solution that not only achieves this objective but outperforms other programs available to students in terms of the breadth and depth of the developmental needs addressed.

Your school will have the opportunity to be on the cutting edge of a program that has been tested in Europe and is now being researched and developed in North America.

Our Program

Our primary focus is after-school clubs or classroom instruction, supplemented throughout the academic year by optional field trips to sanctioned tournament sites to play with children from other schools. The purpose of our programming is not to develop junior bridge champions but rather to motivate and engage children and foster social, emotional, and intellectual growth.

Research Program

During our research phase, we are interested in working with elementary and middle schools to collect pre- and post- standardized test scores for the bridge students and a control group. Our web-based curriculum, written for grades 3-8, comprises 40 lesson plans that any certified teacher, even if unfamiliar with bridge, should be able to utilize. As an additional resource, we will locate an adult bridge mentor in your community who can answer specific questions the teacher may have about the curriculum or other aspects of the program. If the school so desires, the mentor may also visit the school to work directly with the teacher and children or do guest lectures. Our bridge coordinators will notify teachers of field trip dates and locations and other related details. We will provide lesson plans and bridge materials such as classroom duplicate boards and score sheets, etc. Outside funding or nominal support from the school to purchase a start-up supply of bridge materials is highly desirable.

Regular Program

Elementary and middle schools are welcome to purchase our program even if not participating in our research study. This option allows for a school to customize the program to fit their individual needs. After-school bridge clubs will allow students to enjoy an intellectually stimulating activity in a safe environment. Participating schools will have access to our evolving web-based curriculum and benefit from feedback and improvements throughout the course of the research study.

We will work together in recruiting students for the club so that a variety of students have an opportunity to learn and play bridge. One of the wonderful features of bridge is that it integrates people of all abilities and backgrounds into the same venue, each learning and growing at their own pace in the midst of the larger group. After-school clubs usually meet one day a week for two hours or according to the school schedule; however, schools with teams may have additional club hours as needed.



School and Community: A Perfect Partnership

One of the unique aspects of all of our bridge programs is the ability for the children participating to connect with their community. Research on school bridge programs in Europe has shown that children who participate in a school bridge program reap greater benefits the sooner they are involved in the local bridge community.

There are over 3,200 bridge clubs, 300 units and 25 districts in North America. BridgeAtSchools has formed partnerships with many of these organizations in order to provide places for children to compete and participate in mentoring opportunities.

The BridgeAtSchools program provides a minimum of two tournaments a year for children to participate. Children are assigned adult, bridge mentors during this time in order to assist them with this new experience and to provide them with positive community role models.

Children also have the opportunity to play at local clubs and it is our aspiration that parents will be involved in the process and be able to share this wonderful learning opportunity together with their children. For this reason, we provide starter bridge kits for children to take home with them and introduce their family to their new curriculum.

Partner with us and give the students in your school a hand for the future...