

National Blue Ribbon Schools - Audio Profile Transcript Financial Literacy Programs at Saint Andrew Catholic School

Robert Sikora: I'm Robert Sikora and I'm the principal at Saint Andrew Catholic School in Newtown, Pennsylvania.

At Saint Andrew, we have, multiple things that we really push for financial literacy. One that's really unique is our bank. We actually have a real bank on campus, we partner with First National Bank of Newtown, it's available for students and staff to make transactions that you can make at any bank. The goal is to teach the value of a dollar and to learn to save.

We have student tellers in Grades 7 and 8 who work with a professional banker while the bank is open. Tellers must apply, interview and be hired to work in the bank. This is a great experience that many students look to take a part in and teaches basic resume and interview skills along the way.

So the idea was created about 10 years ago by a prior administration to have a real bank in the school for students to become more comfortable and familiar with financial literacy.

We have a program, the Banker of the Week. We have a student every week come on our prayers and announcements. We have a live video stream, and we interview the student, we ask them, "How do you earn your money? What are you saving for?" And that turns into conversation. "Well, I'm saving for a dog, I'm saving for college." It is pretty neat when you, you get a student that says, "You know? I'm, I'm actually saving for, money to donate to the Broken Wing Foundation, which is something my grandpa is a part of." It gives students ideas on how they can make an impact in a positive way with their money whether it's saving for something that's special to them or helping other organizations in our community.

Another great program that we have here is our Junior Achievement Program. They promote financial capability along with work and career readiness. I think one great thing that we've done with that is we've included our community. It's run by parent volunteers. Each homeroom has a parent that volunteers to come in. They teach six lessons in the spring to that homeroom. And as they get older and they get in the eighth grade, it really dives into work and career readiness. So students will actually do research into different careers. What's the pay in those careers, what's the pay in those careers, what's the expectation, what certification do you have to get, do you have to go to college? So it really gets our students to explore job possibilities. And I think the beautiful piece is, it ties the parents. It's really parent-run and the kids enjoy that; the parents enjoy that. Teachers have not worked multiple careers in a lot of cases. So having somebody else come in and talk to them about financial literacy and careers is another important life skill that, that can be taught by members of our community.

Another great program that we have is our Stock Market Club, which is run by teachers who are interested in the stock market and want to share their passion with our students. And they learn about the stock market and ways to invest and save other than just banking, they work in teams, and they buy, trade and track investments through the program.

They actually can compete against other schools, as well, to see who has more earnings and profits, and then something that's really neat, the club takes a field trip to New York and gets to go to Wall Street and gets to see active trading.

The students, in some cases were so successful and so well spoken that they were invited to speak to Rotary Clubs in the community to talk about what they would do, to make recommendations on investments and they saw as potential growth down the road.

We have an incredible community, I think that's the biggest piece, and as a principal it's really cool to see other people on campus, for them to tell you, "This is awesome. Like, how did you create this?", you know? And a lot of it I didn't create. It was our community that created it together.