

May 9, 2013

To Whom It May Concern,

A few months ago, we started our first Forensics team here at Maple School with the help of Willie Washington. Being a mother to a college student on a very nice scholarship received due to his participation in a forensics program during high school, I know how valuable an activity forensics can be.

We were especially excited because our school demographics are 98% Hispanic, the majority of whom started school as second language learners. Our students tend to be shy when faced with new people and opportunities, and tend to have limited life experiences other than visiting family in Mexico.

Since we have started, I have noticed a very big difference in our team members. I have students who never volunteer information except when called upon, suddenly raising their hands and speaking clearly. I have seen growth in the maturity of a couple of our boys. They are able to listen effectively, work in a group, and then deliver a speech without the need to clown it up. This is largely due to Coach Washington's high expectations and treating them as members of a team. They adore working with Coach and the CSUF team members who also volunteer their time.

Our students are excited about practices and have not once asked, "Isn't it time to leave?" They work hard and try extremely hard to comprehend high-level texts and put them into an effective argument. Mostly though, I have observed a higher level of confidence and a willingness to converse with other teachers on campus, something that they normally do not engage in.

This program with its modest start has been a positive, life-changing experience for those involved and those who now wish to be involved next year.

Sincerely,

Theresa Ryan
Maple School Teacher