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Hundreds compete in Academic Pentathlon

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APPLE VALLEY • Sarah Brown didn't have to swim, run, jump, shoot or wield a saber to earn her medal, but she did have to endure some pretty tough competition.

Brown, 13, was one of 299 students from 13 area schools who participated in the High Desert Academic Pentathlon held on the campus of Sitting Bull Academy.

The May 7 competition, between sixth through eighth graders, focused on social science, language arts, mathematics, essay and a "super quiz" in science.

Team and individual awards were presented during a special ceremony at the Sitting Bull campus on May 11, and students from Sitting Bull and Vanguard were recognized at the Apple Valley Unified School District board meeting on May 19.

Brown's team won the overall seventh grade competition for Vanguard Preparatory School.

"It was a lot of fun and worth every practice," Brown said.

Brown's mother, Sherrie, said she appreciated all the hard work from teachers, coaches and students.

Apple Valley schools swept the super quiz team portion of the event with first place going to the Sitting Bull sixth and seventh grades and the Academy for Academic Excellence eighth grade class.

First place in overall team competition went to the Sitting Bull sixth grade and the AAE eighth grade. The sixth grade team from Desert Knolls Elementary placed third in literature.

Teacher Helen "Sam" Scantlin, who coached the AAE pentathletes (pictured), attributed her school's success to teamwork among the teachers who prepared the 24 students for competition.

"I put the team together and organized it, but the teachers really helped in tutoring our kids," Scantlin said. "I'm so proud of our school, teachers and students."

The San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools and the Mountain-Desert Middle School Partnership co-sponsored the event with the goal of encouraging students to excel in their studies and in academic competition.

The event also prepares students for the high school decathlon.

Vanguard Principal Brian Goodrow said his 36 students did a wonderful job representing their school.

In overall team accomplishments the Vanguard sixth grade took second place and the eighth grade placed fifth.

Goodrow, who is celebrating his first year as principal, said the parents, staff and teachers worked well together to prepare students for the event.

"It was a great showing and the strongest showing that we've ever had," Goodrow said. "I am extremely proud of our students and the dedication that our teachers take out of their day to do this."

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