

Richmond Times-Dispatch

The young kids show stock-picking prowess

Published: May 10, 2009

If you need advice about the latest fashion trends or pop culture, consult a high school teen.

If it's the stock market, ask a fifth-grader.

Two teams from South Anna Elementary School in Hanover County beat out hundreds of others -- including middle and high school students -- to take first and second places in their regions during Virginia Commonwealth University's Center for Economic Education Stock Market Game.

From September to December last year, teams from all around the state competed to see who could make the most money. The game is open to students in grades four through 12, and everyone competes with everyone else, not just their own age groups.

The program "just recognizes teams," said South Anna teacher Cammie Gemmill. "They aren't concerned about how old [the students] are."

The first-place team included Chase Evans, Hailey McGrain, Parker Pelham and Tiffany Harris. The second-place team included Noah DeFore, Scott McGowan and Justin Sikkar.

Each team is given a fictional \$100,000 pot of money and "invests" to make as much as possible.

The first-place team ended up with \$105,790.54. The second-place team ended up with \$104,378.64.

There were ups and downs along the way.

The students had to research all of the stocks and their histories before buying.

They also had to calculate brokers' fees for each transaction. They learned about the ticker symbols and how to navigate the New York Stock Exchange Web site.

They talked about a few of their strategies Friday.

"We picked stocks that people knew about," Hailey said.

"They were sharp," said South Anna teacher Sallie Moncol. "They watched the market and waited for it to crash."

Scott said falling stock prices created an opportunity. His team bought stocks when prices were low because "eventually it would go back up," he said, and then they sold them.

Parker said he got some money for his most recent birthday and plans to invest it. Others said they're going to use what they learned when they get older and have jobs.

The students were also thrilled about coming out ahead of older students.

"We're seven years younger than [high school seniors] and we still beat them," Tiffany said.