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## **PROFICIENCY AFTER DARK**

### **John F. Kennedy Junior High School**

#### **Cleveland, Ohio**

Friday night prior to the Ohio Proficiency Test (OPT), students prepared intensively at John F. Kennedy Jr. High School in an innovative partnership program known as “Proficiency After Dark.” Approximately one hundred twenty-nine students stayed overnight at the school to participate in test preparation led by teachers. Parents, community members, students, and school staff made this event a success.

Throughout the evening, students focused on the five areas of the OPT—math, English, science, citizenship, and reading—in academic tutoring sessions. The teacher-pupil ratio was about one to six with additional assistance of a parent or another staff member. Students also took advantage of computer-aided instruction.

Proficiency After Dark went beyond a traditional test preparation class. Counselors, community members, local church members, and parents assisted students in developing self-confidence. Students participated in sports, exercise, and rest breaks as well. Friday dinner and Saturday breakfast were included in the \$30 registration fee, and sponsor contributions absorbed this fee for students unable to pay.

To ensure the well being of all participants, security and custodial staff assisted throughout the evening. Students were separated by gender and by subject. Thirty-two parents attended breakout sessions, which included activities and guest speakers.

Research supports activities such as Proficiency After Dark as a way to increase student success on standardized tests. At Kennedy, review of the proficiency scores found that 70-80% of the students involved in the event passed their content area. About 20% increased their scores, and 95% of the students felt more confident after participating in Proficiency After Dark, as reported on pre- and post-surveys.

Student comments supported the benefits of Proficiency After Dark: “I never could have received the scores without the Proficiency After Dark.” “Thumbs up, it really helped me.” and, “It made the difference. I passed 4 out of 5 parts.” John F. Kennedy Junior High School in

collaboration with parents and community members will continue to implement Proficiency After Dark to support students in passing the Ohio Proficiency Test.

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