

Dennis Horton, 3rd-grade student



# Micro

S O C I E T Y

*Finding the Extraordinary in Every Child.*

Create a society in miniature in your school to motivate your students, improve basic and critical thinking skills, raise test scores, and improve attendance, discipline, and parent and community involvement.

An Elementary and Middle School Program

# Micro

SOCIETY™

citizenship in action

## What is the MicroSociety® program?

*MicroSociety* is an innovative school design where children create a microcosm of the real world inside the school house. Each student has a role in running that world. Young entrepreneurs produce goods and services, elected officials establish laws, CrimeStoppers keep the peace, judges arbitrate disputes, reporters track down stories. All citizens earn wages in the school's "micro" currency, invest in product ideas, deposit and borrow money from "Micro" banks, and pay taxes, tuition and rent.

## How does the program work?

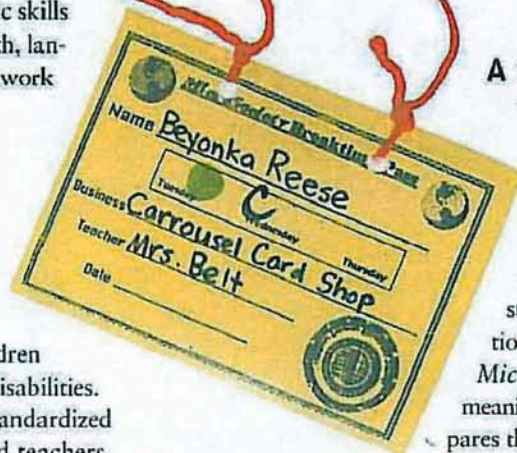
The *MicroSociety* program has been implemented in kindergarten through 8th grade, as well as in after-school programs. Typically, students attend classes in the morning and apply what they learn "on the job" for one hour in the afternoon. *MicroSociety* integrates these real-world connections into curriculum and instruction throughout the day.

## How it all began

*MicroSociety* was created in 1967 by Dr. George Richmond, then a 5th-grade rookie New York City teacher. Faced with 33 unruly kids, he reasoned: if grades and discipline didn't motivate them to learn, maybe freedom and responsibility would. He decided to build a fun new world—a micro society—where basic skills would be relevant to their daily lives. It worked. Math, language and reading skills improved significantly. Teamwork and cooperation flourished.

## Proven results—especially for at-risk students

The program creates powerful incentives for all children to learn. Its impact has been especially remarkable with those who struggle hardest to succeed—children from low-income families, children with limited English proficiency, and children with disabilities. The program leads to significant improvement in standardized test scores, grades, behavior, and attendance. And teachers, students, and parents love it.



Eugenio Maria de Hostos School in Yonkers, NY.

## A nationwide movement

Today, the *MicroSociety* program has been adopted by more than 250 schools in 40 states and has received national recognition as a comprehensive school reform model. Schools look to *MicroSociety* to help them solve problems with student learning and achievement, motivation, attendance, behavior, and climate. The *MicroSociety* program helps students find meaning and purpose in their education and prepares them to become active citizens.

Behind the doors of your school is the future of the world.

"Imagine a place where children learn math by holding jobs, paying taxes and owning businesses that sell everything from pompom pencils to potpourri pillows. A place where students study logic and law by taking their peers to court and fining them in the school's own currency. A place where kids come to understand politics by drawing up their own constitution, drafting laws and deciding which days of the week that baseball caps may be worn to class. Imagine, in short, a school where civics is not just a course but a continuous experience in playing with the building blocks of society... Called "MicroSociety," these programs bear as much resemblance to the standard neighborhood school—with its traditional textbooks, worksheets and lesson plans—as fiber-optic communication does to sending smoke signals."

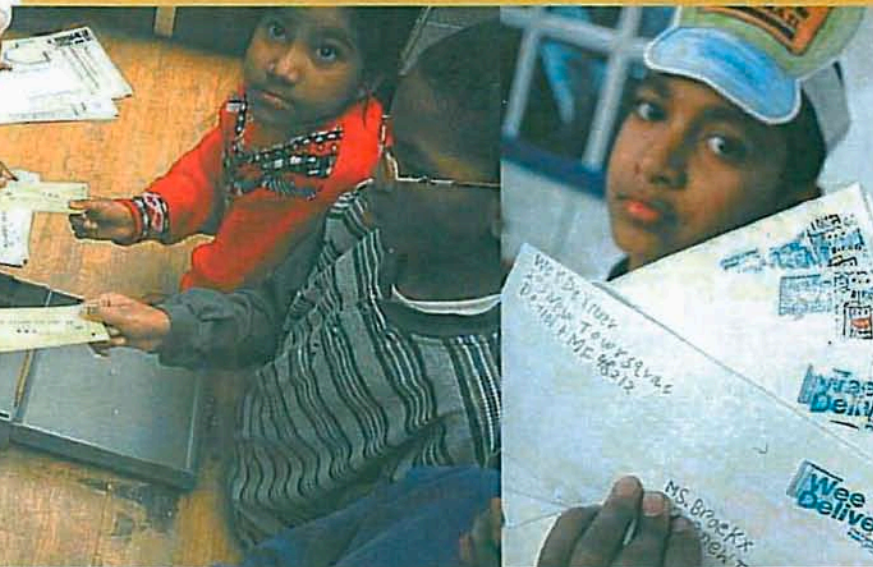
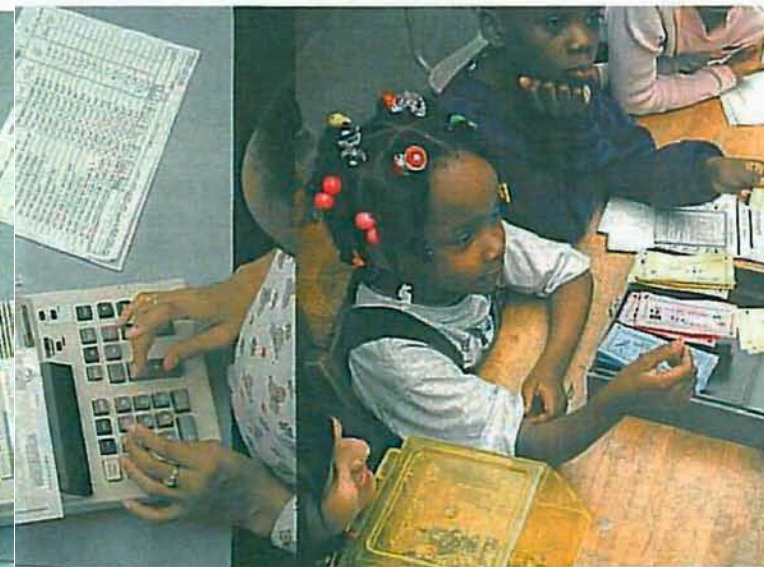
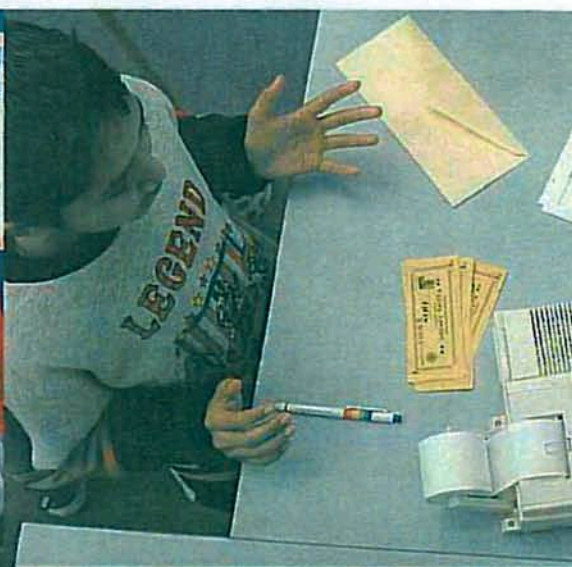
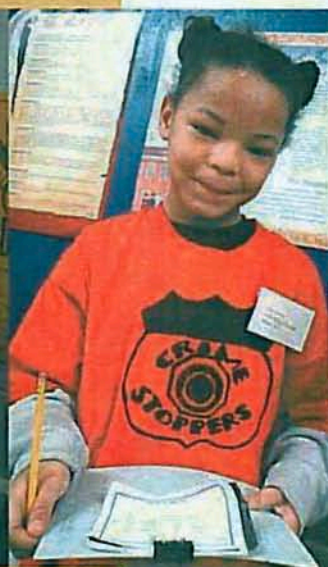
— Kevin Fedarko, *Time*, September 21, 1992

# A Comprehensive Approach

The six major components of the MicroSociety program are:

- Technology
- Economy
- Academy
- Citizenship & Government
- Humanities and the Arts
- HEART (service and ethics)

At the core of the program are the "essential elements": an internal currency, retail and labor markets, government agencies, non-profits, businesses, and private and public property, along with enhanced parent and business community involvement, a hallmark of all MicroSociety programs.



# Standards and Basic Skills Come Alive

## Reading and writing to succeed

A modern economy depends on a literate work force, as well as literate consumers. *MicroSociety* provides a context that makes reading functional and fun. In the courtroom, marketplace and newsroom, reading, writing, and communication skills spell the difference between success and failure. With *MicroSociety's* reading program, *The Reading Industry*, students create an entire industry of literacy-related businesses and services.

## Math as a survival skill

Hundreds of transactions occur during "Micro" time each day. Math is elevated to a survival skill. Students need arithmetic to buy and sell, create budgets, maintain a checkbook, and calculate taxes. They need geometry to measure floor plans or design jewelry. They apply algebra and statistics to financial reports and spreadsheets.

## Living social studies

The *MicroSociety* program turns social studies into a living lesson in citizenship and government, world culture, and geography. Students forge a social contract in a Constitutional Convention. They learn how government works in the legislature and debate social issues in town meetings. Coached by teachers, children learn to resolve conflicts, negotiate, persuade, and defend their actions in court.

## Science in action

Science lessons come to life when student architects and engineers erect new storefronts, when entrepreneurs use technology to invent or manufacture products for the marketplace. "Micro" government researchers apply biology to cutting-edge recycling campaigns, healthcare policies, and public green spaces.

# Not Adequate...Proficient!

"Micro provides a way to implement all the standards. By installing this new operating system, our students are reaching the expectations required by the standards on a daily basis. And, we are getting results."

— Triana Olivas  
Principal, El Paso, Texas

## MicroSociety delivers results: Higher academic achievement and civic engagement

"With MicroSociety, no child is left behind. We have learned that the hearing and deaf worlds don't have to clash. With the MicroSociety program we in the deaf community are connected to the hearing world through our experiences and jobs."

— Milagros Herrera,  
Bruce Street School for the Deaf  
Signed speech, first MicroCongress,  
September 16, 2004, U.S. House of  
Representatives, Cannon Caucus Room.

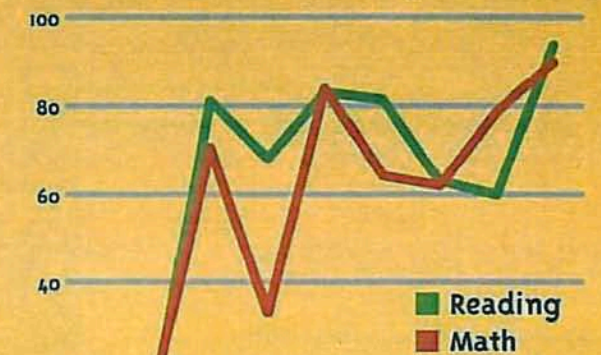
## Excelling to meet the needs of the underserved

The *MicroSociety* program has been cited by the US Department of Education for its impressive results in serving children whose high poverty, racial or ethnic background, handicap, or English language deficiency place them at a distinct disadvantage for being successful in our society. In every group, *MicroSociety* students experienced advances in academic achievement and improved attendance, behavior and attitude toward school. As one reviewer reported, "the program is revolutionary, phenomenal, and truly on the cutting edge of education."

In a 2003 study of schools with multi-year *MicroSociety* programs, Arete, Inc. found that across all grades in all *MicroSociety* schools reading and math scores improved 14% and 21% respectively over two years.

Incrementally, both reading and math increased 7% in the first year and in the second, 7% for math and 14% for reading, far exceeding the Adequate Yearly Progress requirements under No Child Left Behind.

## William Davison Elementary Detroit, Michigan

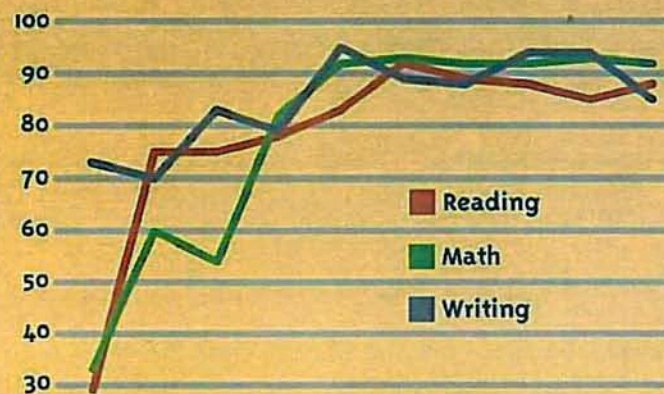


Michigan Assessment Scores  
(% of children meeting state standards)

	1991	1993	1998	1999	2000	2001*	2002	2003	2004
Reading	10	15	70.5	33	83.8	64.2	62	78.5	89.8
Math	11.1	13	81.1	68.2	83	81.3	63.1	59.9	93.7

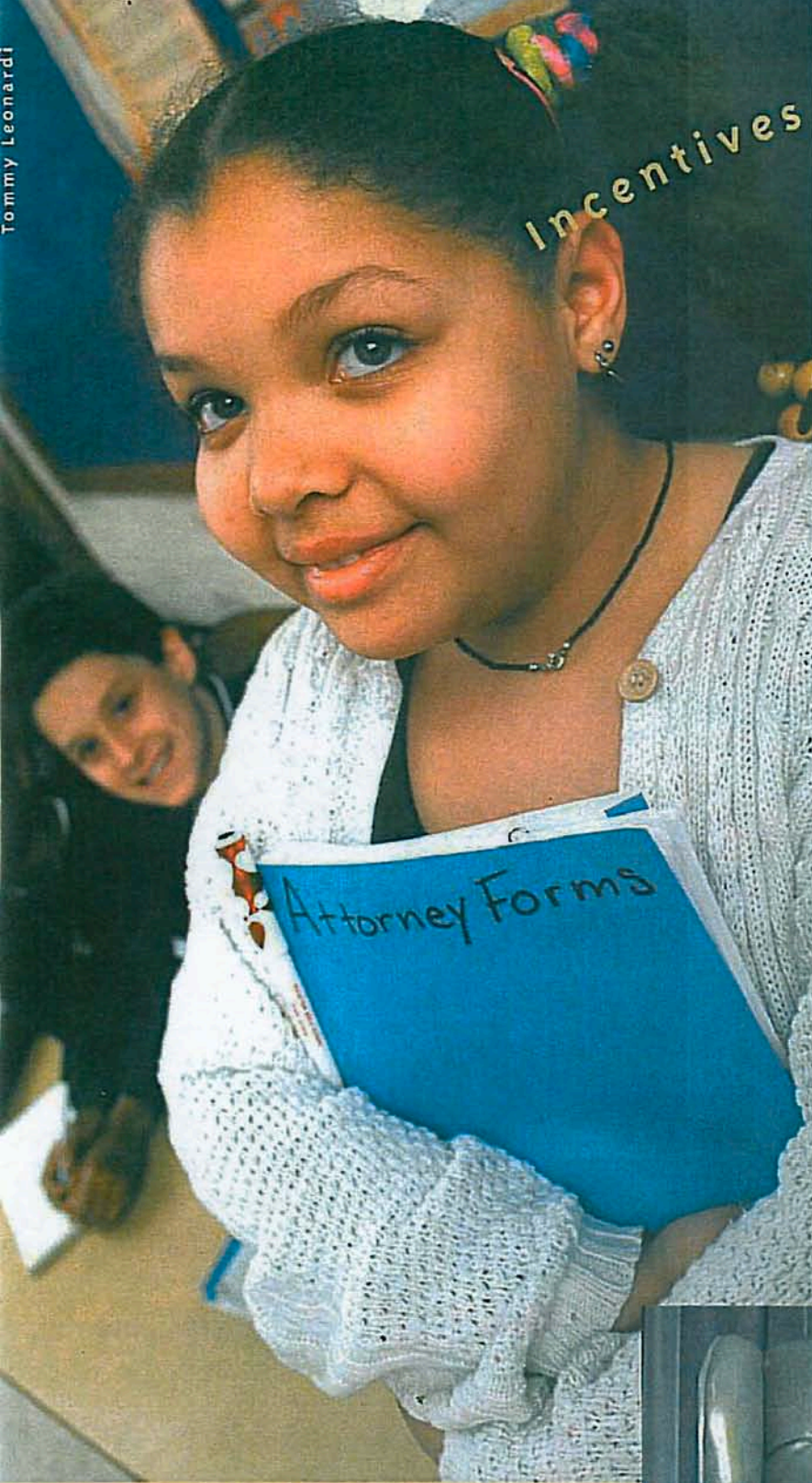
\*new tests introduced

## Sageland Elementary School, El Paso, Texas



Texas Assessment of Academic Skills  
(% of children meeting state standards)

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Reading	29	75	75	78	83	92	89	88	85	88
Math	33	60	54	82	92	93	92	92	93	92
Writing	73	70	83	79	95	89	88	94	94	85



# Incentives for middle grades students to learn

## "Why do I need to know this?"

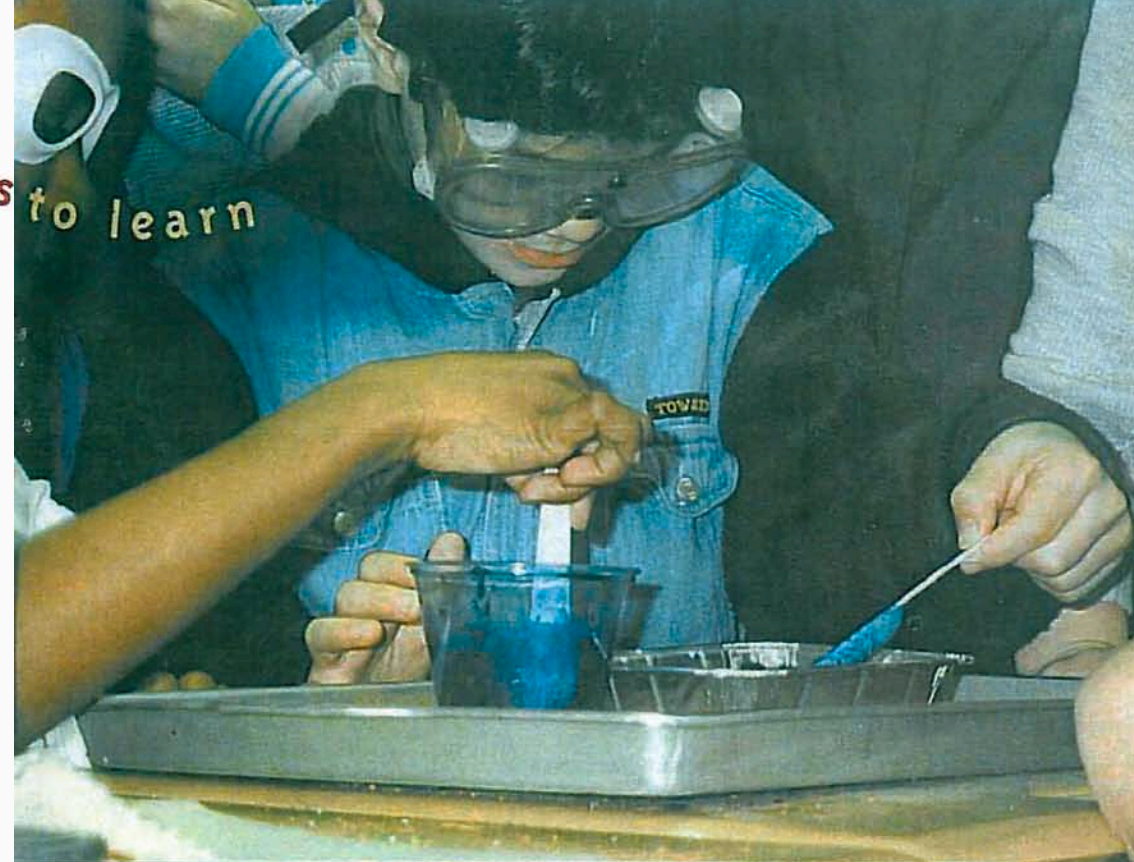
It's a question children ask every day, especially in the middle grades where students see little connection between the schoolwork and the outside world of their families and neighborhoods. For many students, good grades just don't offer sufficient incentive to learn, let alone succeed.

In the *MicroSociety* program, rewards are immediate and tangible. Mastery of basic skills becomes necessary to excel as a lawyer, banker, legislator and entrepreneur. Social and financial rewards transform students from passive learners to active participants in their own development. Self-esteem improves with a new sense of accomplishment.

## Middle Grade Students

The *MicroSociety* program addresses the need of middle school students to be taken seriously and to feel that what they do in school is worthwhile. The program's hands-on, real world activities provide them with academic reinforcement, nurture their development of critical thinking skills, and begin their development as contributing members of the community outside the school.

Students in a *MicroSociety* program retain far more of their studies because they learn by doing and are motivated by meaningful work in their jobs. Through direct experiences with a broad spectrum of careers, students come to appreciate the skills of their adult counterparts and the real-life choices and decisions they must make. They *apply* technology, *prepare and analyze* budgets, *write* business plans, *work cooperatively* to resolve ethical issues, *use critical thinking* to assess government policies, and *argue* briefs in court. Every day, students combine basic skills into higher order thinking applications. Teachers support these new skills with targeted academic preparation across all disciplines. Better discipline and attendance



"In high school there are drugs, gangs, alcohol and things that 'Micro' helps you realize you should stay away from. 'Micro' helps you see there is a real world out there. You know there is a future for you, and you want to be part of it."

— Tanya,  
a 10th-grade alumnus

## A stronger school community – inside and out

### Micro students become school leaders

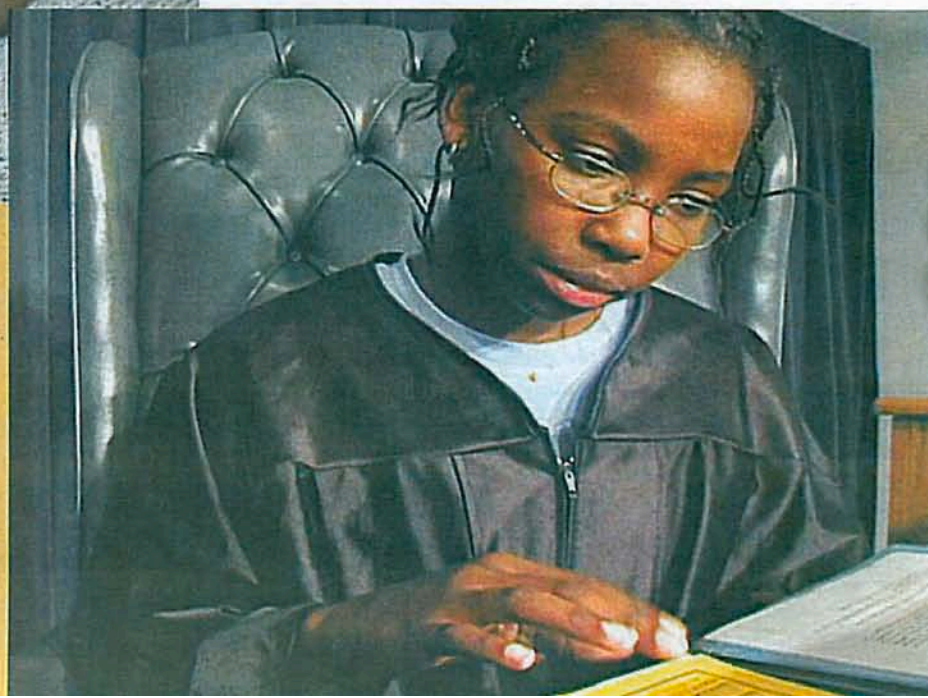
They feel empowered as they make the rules that govern behavior in their miniature society. They play an active role in maintaining order and in solving community problems. Peer culture becomes a positive force for social development. As primary stakeholders in ventures and organizations students discover the benefit of a secure, cooperative environment where all students can flourish. Micro Graduates credit their experience with helping them avoid trouble long after graduation from the program.

### Greater parent and community involvement

The *MicroSociety* program creates a welcoming environment that makes it easier to recruit parent and community support. Volunteer roles are varied, meaningful to parents and community partners, and require minimal supervision. Parents, local business leaders, and government officials enjoy sharing their "real world" expertise with students and teachers. They discover they have valuable skills, talents, and experience to offer children and become active partners in the school community.

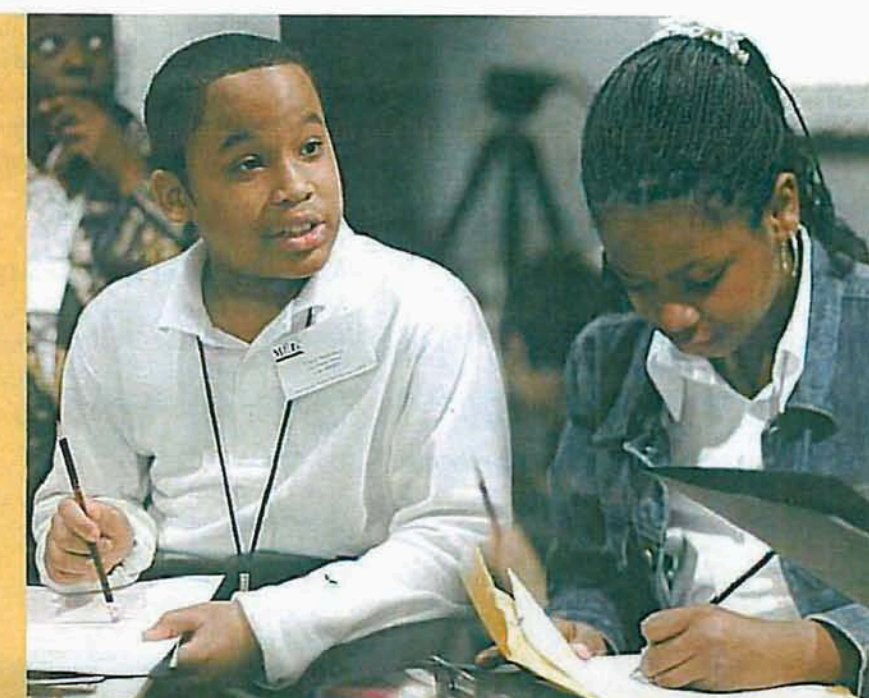
"The reason I stay involved with the *MicroSociety* program is because it works. I can see the impact of my contribution."

— Jaime Esparza,  
District Attorney, El Paso, TX



"*MicroSociety* is an example of applying real learning theory—that we understand to work in the real world—to kids' lives. It's authentic. It's real. It not only mimics, but prepares them for the real tasks they'll have to do when middle grade students leave school: to work for other people, to solve problems, to use resources. That's what we want!"

— Linda Darling-Hammond,  
Stanford University Teachers College



Bring the benefits of MicroSociety to your school

# Micro

## SOCIETY™

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### Approved reform model

The research-based *MicroSociety* program has been approved by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory for inclusion in its *Catalog of School Reform Models*. Inclusion was based on the program's "impact on student achievement, extent of replication, capacity to provide training and support, and comprehensiveness."

### Going "Micro" helps your school expand funding opportunities

The *MicroSociety* program uses strategies that are readily understood and supported by the community. Producing concrete results makes it easier to attract business investment and partnerships, and qualify for foundation support, honors and awards. As in the popular children's story, *Stone Soup*, community members actively seek ways to enrich the broth.

### The "Micro" network supports you

MICROSOCIETY, INC. is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization founded by Dr. George Richmond in 1991. It provides support, training, technical assistance and networking opportunities to the growing number of teachers implementing programs based on *MicroSociety* principles. MICROSOCIETY offers a wide range of instructional materials, publications and consulting services for all stages of implementation.



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Dai Ichi Kangyo

"The most moving, the most touching,  
the most profound, the most optimistic,  
the most imaginative, and the most  
practical book on children and schools  
in many, many dreary years"

—Peter Drucker