

## *We choose Albany public schools because ...*

### **‘Giffen Gems’ celebrate success**

The “Giffen Gems” sparkled in December.

The Gems – Giffen Memorial Elementary School students in grades 3-6 who scored Level 3 or Level 4 on their 2006-07 New York State exams – were lauded at a special assembly.

It coincided with Giffen’s regular observance of College Day on the first Friday of each month. Numerous area colleges, including Hudson Valley Community College, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Siena, The College of St. Rose, the University at Albany and Union College, as well as corporate sponsor M&T Bank, donated T-shirts and backpacks as prizes for the about 100 students who received certificates of achievement.

The day also marked the initiation of a buddy system.

“The Gems pair up with classmates or friends to act as peer tutors and share their secrets of working cooperatively in the classroom,” said Giffen Acting Principal Beverly Ivey. “They help each other to be successful and the Gems teach their peers how to achieve.”

College Day is a new tradition at Giffen this year aimed at generating interest in attending college at a young age. Teachers and administrators are encouraged to wear a college sweatshirt or T-shirt of their choice.

“This program was created to plant the seeds in young people that there’s a college out there for everyone who wants to go,” said Ms. Ivey.