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## Crane GAP students tops in Yuma

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A pilot program that paired the resources of private enterprise with a public school to bolster student test scores has proven to be a resounding success, according to a Crane School District official.

The Gowan Achievement Project (GAP), special classes for **90 high achieving students** at Rancho Viejo School, demonstrated that the investment of Gowan Company, an agricultural chemical business, paid off in substantial dividends of higher academic performance.

"GAP is not a gifted program," said Chris Weigel, Crane's communications director. "It addresses the needs of students who meet or exceed the state standards as measured by AIMS scores."

The Gowan Company invested \$300,000 before the beginning of this school year to provide supplemental resources for high performing students that included laptop computers with "**A+ software**," field trips and three master teachers who devoted attention to lessons they cannot do in a regular classroom.

"GAP students benefitted greatly from the enhancements the Gowan Company provided," Weigel said.

"All students made gains but the ones who had laptops, digital cameras, video projectors and all the things we can't ordinarily afford - it was obvious it was the GAP students who made significantly higher gains."

**Measured against a control group who followed a more traditional curriculum, GAP students outperformed the control group in **mathematics by 2-to-1** in average percentage gained per student. In **science**, GAP students did better by an **8-to-1** ratio, Weigel noted.**

Before the school year started, both GAP students and the control group, at a similar socio-economic level, were pretested to find out what they did and did not know before

their separate curriculums were implemented. At the completion of the school year, students were tested again.

In fourth-grade mathematics, GAP students **improved by 32 percent** while the control group improved 12 percent. In fifth grade it was **29 percent** for GAP and 25 percent for the control group, while in sixth grade it was a **47 percent gain** for GAP students and 17 percent gain for the control group.

AIMS data showed Crane has equaled or exceeded the state average in 12 out of 18 grade level scores in reading, math and writing. Crane also excelled over all other schools in Yuma in all 18 grade level categories.

Gowan Company founder and CEO Jon Jessen said the state as a whole has a problem with underfunding education.

Jessen focused on the issue after he started having difficulty recruiting scientists for his company when potential employees cited the importance of well endowed local schools when considering whether to relocate to Arizona.

"The results were spectacular, I was very pleased with them," Jessen said of GAP.

**He said plans are to not only continue GAP at Rancho Viejo this coming school year but expand it to Centennial and Crane middle schools.**

The exact extent of the expansion is still in the planning stage but already new laptops are being ordered and new wireless network infrastructure is being established, he said.

"GAP is not aimed solely at potential (Gowan) employees," Jessen noted. "We want to raise the level of education in the community at large and prepare kids for college and professional training."

Crane is thrilled that Gowan is extending GAP and is interviewing teachers now who look suitable for the program, Weigel said.

"We'd love to garner greater support among industry to make a more profound impact on student achievement in Yuma," he said.

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