

# Changing the Classroom Equation Adds Up to Success

*How one Tennessee elementary school kept their doors open by improving their math AYP.*

Kingsley Elementary is a small school tucked into the quiet community of Kingsport, TN, a peaceful area of northeast Tennessee that boasts majestic mountains, tranquil lakes, and sparkling streams. The academic theme of Kingsley Elementary is "Where the Wheels of Learning are Always Turning," and the school works hard to maintain that motto with their school programs that include a Title I program, speech program, gifted program, resource program, and CDC class. They had already proven academic success several years ago, when they created a Kingsley School Improvement Plan for writing that resulted in a 58% gain in student writing performance.

So it came as a surprise to Principal Dr. Sandra Ramsey when she found her school on the list for improvement because they were not meeting their math AYP scores. Suddenly, she was faced with the possibility that her school might be shut down.

"We thought we were doing fine until the scores came in last year," Ramsey says. "Our third grade math was weak. We had to put our heads together and find tools to help our teachers and students."

They did some research about courseware programs that would help them target and improve areas of weakness in their elementary math program. After doing the research and



talking to other schools, they wanted to purchase the *A+nyWhere Learning System*® (*A+LS*™) courseware program, but were afraid they couldn't afford it.

"We needed the tools to help us improve scores," says Ramsey, "but we thought it would be too expensive." Luckily, it wasn't. Ramsey says she and her board worked with American Education Corporation to put together a package that worked with their budget.

"Our teachers and students worked very hard," says Ramsey. "The third and fourth grade teachers used the math instruction from the *A+LS* courseware program with their students for one hour a day, every day. The courseware helped students review all kinds of math facts; it helped them to learn how to do the math. It's a wonderful tool."



"Teachers like that the courseware does a good job of reviewing all math facts," Ramsey continues. "Students use the program to review each chapter from class, and the program can pinpoint their weaknesses. The students who are struggling in math can work at their level, and the ones who need more of a challenge can also succeed on the courseware." Ramsey says her math teachers also use an interactive whiteboard to work on lessons together as a class.

Because the *A+LS* lessons are aligned to Tennessee state standards, students and teachers could target their learning to match the specific test requirements of their state. These lessons were combined with other resources, including TCAT test practice booklets and Thinklink Learning, a predictive assessment program that matches diagnostic assessments to each state's high-stakes test so teachers can see student results before they actually test.

All the hard work paid off. When the school retested at the end of the year, their math scores rose 22 points. They were off the target list.

"We did so fantastically with high marks," says Ramsey. "Using the *A+LS* courseware program helped us have better test scores. My third grade scores went from 74 to 98, and my fourth grade scores went from 81 to 94!"

A combination of hard work and solid teaching tools helped Kingsley Elementary meet and exceed their AYP in math. "We were able to help each individual child review and improve math on his level. This is a great thing."



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