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Curriculum Enhancement:

Henry J. Kaiser High School, Fontana, California

Implementation Context:

The Fontana Unified School District is located in Southern California in what is known as the Inland Empire, a fast-growing community 50 miles east of Los Angeles. Fontana is at the intersection of Interstate 10 and 15 and State Routes 66 and 30. Fontana's present population is estimated at 139,100. The City's incorporated area is 36 square miles, with a sphere of influence of 56 square miles.

In 2002/03, Kaiser High School enrolled 2,575 students in 9th through 12th grade on a traditional school year calendar.

Beginning with the class of 2006, one of the graduation requirement for California students will be to pass both the mathematics and literacy portions of the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE). Students are given an opportunity to take the test once in their second year of high school and, as needed, multiple times in succeeding years. The class of 2006 took the CAHSEE for the first time as 10th graders in February 2004.

The CAHSEE has two parts: English-language arts (ELA) and mathematics. The ELA part addresses state content standards through grade 10. In reading, this includes vocabulary, decoding, comprehension, and analysis of information and literary texts. In writing, this covers writing strategies, applications, and the conventions of English (e.g. grammar, spelling, and punctuation). The mathematics part of the CAHSEE addresses state standards in 6th and 7th grades and Algebra I. The exam includes statistics, data analysis and probability, number sense, measurement and geometry, mathematical reasoning, and algebra. Students are also asked to demonstrate a strong foundation in computation and arithmetic, including working with decimals, fractions, and percents.

Kaiser High School scored average on their 2004 test dates. Seventy-six per cent of students passed the Math portion at Kaiser, and 73% passed the ELA segment of the exam. This is on par with the state, whereby 74% of students in the state passed the Math and 75% of students in the state passed the ELA section of the exam.

Kaiser High School is using testGEAR math and testGEAR ELA as a curriculum enhancement, to help their students be prepared for upcoming tests.

Course of Action:

Kaiser High School had already been a customer of Bridges for a number of years. When testGEAR was introduced, Kaiser felt it was only natural to try out this new product, especially since the CAHSEE was going to be mandatory for the class of 2006. They used testGEAR with the approximately 45 ELA and math students, as well as with their SAT class of another 40 students.

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The math and ELA teacher liked using testGEAR with his students as a curriculum enhancement. He has a computer lab classroom, so it easily fit his needs.

The online capability of testGEAR allows all the students in his classroom to use it at the same time. He uses it as a teaching tool. For instance, there are kids who can't understand certain aspects of algebra or geometry.

Many students were turned off of math, but found the online tool to be fun. He would have them use testGEAR and indeed he saw their skills improve and their test scores get better. He finds it is a very useful tool to use in conjunction with the teaching in the classroom. He finds it's also a good way to test his teaching, since it pulls the questions from the curriculum. He can tell if he needs to re-teach something, by looking in the testscope reports and seeing if a good number of the students do not understand certain concepts.

Kaiser High School likes the fact that testGEAR adheres to the course standards, has student/parent accessibility and finds that the accountability segment is key to successfully using the program. They renewed their testGEAR subscription.