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Programmed Course:

Crosby High School,
Crosby, Texas

Implementation Context:

Crosby High School is situated in the northeast corner of Harris County, which is the third largest county in the United States with a population of over three million people. Houston, Texas – also in Harris County -- is just 24.4 miles away from Crosby. In the past, Crosby was mostly an agricultural town, but is now in transition from rural-suburban to more of a truly industrial/suburban area due to the increasing demand for more housing. There is a large percentage of the population with a mid to lower income, and it is estimated that just 40% of students at Crosby High School have a computer at home.

Crosby High School has 1,400 students with a graduation rate of 84.7%. It's a public school, with 9^{th} through 12^{th} grades. Approximately 60% of students take the SAT/ACT with an average SAT score of 1015 and an average ACT score of 19.6. Many students plan to go onto junior college after graduation.

At Crosby High School, the student-to-computer ratio is approximately 2.8 to 1. They are currently adding a new wing to their school, which will add another 60 computers in the new library and six new labs with 24 more computer stations in each lab. This construction is slated to be complete by the beginning of the 2005/2006 school year.

Course of Action:

Crosby High School has been trying to have a SAT test prep class as an elective for many years, but student uptake was never enough. They decided to purchase testGEAR this year so they could try to offer the SAT test prep course again, as well as to offer it to students who would be needing test prep help outside of school hours.

This year is the first year that Crosby High School has been able to have a SAT test prep class as an elective, since 20 students enrolled. The class is taught by a journalism teacher who has a strong background in English and is a big advocate of test prep.

Crosby High School feels that once there is success with these SAT test prep student scores, word will get around the school and it will be a more popular offering in the years to come. The feedback so far from the students is that they are very happy with the class and they feel it is really going to improve their chances on the test.

testGEAR is used in the SAT test prep classroom three or four days a week as part of their curriculum, and at least one day a week the math department chair or English department chair come into the classroom to teach the SAT test prep students specific work in those areas.

This is a one-semester class for credit.

Besides using testGEAR in the SAT test prep class, Crosby High School has also introduced it through their English and Math sophomore through senior classes. The teachers brought the

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students into a computer lab three or four weeks before administrating the PSAT. They went into the computer lab three or four different times during class time. Then, the kids were expected to work on testGEAR on their own time from home or school.

A number of computers are available to students in the library before school, at lunch and after school. During that period leading up to the PSAT, the school had a tremendous amount of usage. Some of the teachers offered extra credit for work done on the PSAT, but most students used testGEAR simply because they wanted to do well on the test.

Crosby High School also held a parent open house at the high school and they gave the information to the parents of sophomores, juniors and seniors taking the PSAT, SAT and ACT. They printed business cards with the testGEAR web address and access codes and gave it to the parents.

Parents have been really pleased with testGEAR, as they see their kids are using it at home. Fifty or 60 kids are scheduled to take the SAT at the next sitting and the school has noticed their usage is ramping up again. They notice the kids use it the most in the three to four weeks leading up to one of the test dates.

At times, over 100 computers in the school are using testGEAR at the same time.