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# Stand Alone:
# Fort Dorchester High School,
# South Carolina

**Implementation Context:**

Fort Dorchester High School is a public high school located in suburban North Charleston, South Carolina. It opened in 1992 and is a 75-acre campus. There are 1912 students in grades 9 through 12. Fort Dorchester has a graduation rate of 76.4%, with approximately 50% of high school graduates enrolling in some sort of post secondary education.

Average SAT scores in the district for the 2002/2003 academic year were 1046 (with the state average being 989 and national average 1026). Fort Dorchester High School is located in a suburban neighborhood, with businesses located in neighboring counties. There are 16 schools in the district, with another four being built.

With its close proximity to Charleston, the community is experiencing tremendous population growth as families choose to make their homes in this area. As in the community, student enrollment is a blend of relatively stable "old" town residents, permanent and transient suburban elements, and generally highly stable rural elements.

**Course of Action:**

The Media Specialist was asked by the principal to do some research into software for SAT/ACT improvement. She came across Bridges' testGEAR and decided that it would greatly benefit their school's 9$^{th}$ through 12$^{th}$ grade students. At the same time, one of their business partners gave their school the money so that they could purchase testGEAR.

The school does not have an over abundance of computers for students to use. There is a writing lab with 28 computers and a media center with 18 computers. The school decided the best way to implement testGEAR would be to offer the information to students and parents at every opportunity, so that everyone knew they could use testGEAR from both home and school.

Innovative ways this school "got the word out" include:

- Putting a notice on the bottom of report cards that said "Want to improve your SAT/ACT test scores? Check out testGEAR…call the school for more information."
- Advertising in the school newsletter
- An article in the school newspaper
- Advertising through their in-house broadcasting system
- Setting up a table at registration, at the beginning of the school year
- Talking about testGEAR at parent/teacher interviews
- Having all teachers announce it in class

With all of the advertising around the school, many students came directly to her to find out more information about testGEAR. Parents called the school as well, and she would mail home the information. She found there was almost always success when the student had someone in their

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life (a parent or a teacher) to support the student and make sure they were “plugging along” through the course.

Students take advantage of the media center afterschool throughout the school year to practice on testGEAR. The Media Specialist finds the peak of testGEAR use in this program is a few weeks leading up to the exam, when both students and parents are thinking about the test the most.