

Math Program Seeing Amazing Results

"Singapore" Math Program Helping Students Succeed

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GRAND JUNCTION, CO -- A local school's students are scoring off the charts in math. They're using a system modeled after Singapore. KJCT News 8 explains how it's working wonders in the classroom.

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Messiah Lutheran School is a small private Christian school near downtown Grand Junction. Principal Neal Kaspar's students struggled in math like many students across the country. "I really had some difficulties with the textbook. There was so much color, so many pictures; it was distracting. I found it incredibly distracting, it was almost like an MTV presentation," says Kaspar.

Kaspar along with Dr. Bill Hyde, a math teacher at the school, went searching for a program that would inspire the students to greatness. "What math should teach anybody is organization; even if you're a poor math student, one thing you ought to take out of the math class is organization," explains Hyde. Hyde and Kaspar found their answer in

Singapore, in a math program they implemented two and a half years ago. "The books are small, about 90 pages. The print is big, it's easy," remarks Hyde.

Singapore's students rank near the top worldwide when it comes to math skills. The program is based on mental math, or shortcuts that help students get to answers quickly. "The visual stuff helps me understand how you're getting all these numbers to put into formulas instead of just random numbers out of the blue," says 7th grader Jared Bashai.

The program focuses on model drawing, or having students draw pictures to visualize word problems. "You write down your question, and then you write down the data, and then you draw your picture so that can help you a little bit," explains 4th grader Jessie Mello.

It also teaches the students life skills at a young age. "When I go to the store, if I have a \$20 bill, I can add up the stuff and see if I have enough to buy everything," remarks 5th grader Courtney Krieger.

The school's most recent test scores show junior high school students performing at college levels. "Doing it in my head doesn't really work as well, when I write it out it helps me look through it and find all that I can do with it," says 8th grader Bo Mello.

But the program has done more than help students make the grade, it's changed their attitude about math. "It's really fun," says 4th grader Jessie Mello. "We're very excited about it, the teachers have gotten on board, and they're excited about it," says Principal Neal Kaspar.

The program has also tapped a talent in math many students never knew they had. The school's students also compete in local math competitions. They'll be introducing the program to their 1st grade and Kindergarten students soon.

For more information on Messiah Lutheran School, visit www.messiahlutherangj.org