



Case Study:

Eugene Field A+ Elementary School, Sioux Falls, SD

Overview

PROFILE

Eugene Field A+ Elementary School, the first A+ (arts plus academics) school in South Dakota, has a mix of students from different socio-economic backgrounds, and is a part of the Sioux Falls School District in South Dakota with a total student enrollment of 350.

CHALLENGE

At Eugene Field A+ Elementary school, ensuring academic growth by all students was the primary concern. District leaders recognized the need to provide growth opportunities for ALL levels of learners - from students below grade level to students that need extension and enrichment with above grade level content. After realizing a need for a resource where students at or above grade level would continue to grow, a preference for a rigorous, engaging, and student-driven learning program emerged.

SOLUTION

Exemplars inquiry approach to learning captured Eugene Fields A+ Elementary's attention through its ability to strengthen student problem solving and mathematical-communication skills. Exemplars was so beneficial to use, in fact, that teachers relied on this resource to supplement the gaps in their current curriculum during intervention and small group time, catered towards students performing at or above grade level.

Exemplars Leads Proficient Students to Higher Growth Than Previous Years



Marissa Schlup
Project Lead
4th Grade Math Teacher



Sioux Falls

School Profile

- Population Density: Suburban*
- Size: 420 K-5 Enrollment*
- Math Proficiency: 47%*
- Free & Reduced Lunch: 33%*

*Source: niche.com

Read the full study



The Challenge

Leaders at Eugene Field A+ Elementary School noticed that large cohorts of proficient and above-grade level students were not showing equivalent growth as their counterparts each year. Eugene Field A+ Elementary already had programs in place to support students performing below grade level. The growth gap between different proficiency levels of students would need to be addressed. Providing proficient students with an easy to use, independently-driven, and fundamentally challenging program that strengthens mathematical critical thinking and reasoning skills became a vital problem to solve.

Choosing Exemplars

Understanding that the school already had mathematical programs in rotation, it was important to find a resource that would differentiate from other digital apps that didn't provide enough mathematical meaning which also led to student burn out. The rigorous and engaging performance tasks within Exemplars combined with the inquiry-based approach in learning provided Eugene Field A+ Elementary with a strong initiative to boost mathematical skills in already proficient students that previously showed stagnant growth. Students that weren't used to challenges began to look forward to working on Exemplars tasks and even asked to use the tool on days when it wasn't a part of their intervention lesson.

The Outcome

Immediately after implementation, teachers noticed that students were highly engaged with the compelling tasks provided through Exemplars. Soon, students were thriving during their extension and small group time while authenticating their mathematical ability by communicating their math thinking through both verbal and written formats. Exemplars provided a way for students to take problem-solving steps, learn how to work through the rigorous assignments, and to communicate with peers to identify strategies to solve many interesting challenges. As the year went on, students developed more self-agency and peer support and those students that used Exemplars have shown higher growth than previous years. Teachers continue to be amazed at how students are now able to articulate and share their mathematical thinking and reasoning while maintaining their high levels of motivation as they work with Exemplars.

“ It is really fun to watch my students grow in how they think about math! ”

Marissa Schlup
4th Grade Math Teacher
Eugene Field A+ Elementary