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Sanders improves AYP with “Ascend Education”

Sanders – Long considered a failing school, Sanders Elementary School recently implemented several programs in an effort to bring up student reading and math scores, and for those efforts, the school has been named a model school.

After failing to make adequate yearly progress for a few years, the school started working with Ascend Education to bring students’ math competency up to grade level. It is Ascend Education that named Sanders Elementary as a model school.

After a year with the program, student scores increased from 27 percent passing to 40 percent. “We think of ourselves as a school that is working hard to improve quality education,” math interventionist James Girard said of the school’s accomplishments. “We’re just doing our job. We don’t think of ourselves as a model school.”

Among the changes the school made was the addition of two math interventionists and one reading interventionist. They are paid through a school improvement grant from the Arizona Public Education Department.

Essentially, the new math education program gives students a series of placement tests, which determine their strengths and weaknesses. When students are taught something but assessments show that they have not learned the concept, the teaching strategy is re-evaluated, and the subject is retaught. Girard said this technique has proved extremely successful for Sanders Elementary.

Girard said that Ascend Education looks for excellent implantation their program and improved test scores in considering when to award model school status.

“The educators at Sanders Elementary School are master implementers of Ascend Math,” an Ascend Math news release said. “They regularly set ambitious goals and use data to monitor student progress and improve upon their success.”

The news release stated that model schools share best practices with other struggling schools.