

EverydayMathematics® Success Stories

KANSAS

Believing That All Students Can Achieve in Geary County Schools

Located in the east-central part of the state, the Geary County Unified School District (USD) serves four communities within the county: Grandview, Milford, Junction City and on-post at military base Fort Riley. The district enrolls approximately 6,300 students in Grades PK-12 and operates 13 elementary schools, 2 middle schools and 1 high school.

The presence of Fort Riley tremendously impacts the schools in Geary County. A total of 65% of students are identified as federally connected with the majority being children of military personnel stationed at the base. Over one-half of the student population qualifies for free or reduced-price lunches. The mobility rate in the district is high among both students and teachers.

Unlike most places in the state, the student population in Geary County Schools is very diverse both ethnically and geographically. Because their parents are connected to the military, many students have lived all across the United States and the world. Significantly, this diversity is viewed as one of the strengths of the community where all work together and accept each other.

Leader in State

The Geary County USD enjoys the reputation as one of the leading school districts in the state of Kansas. The district's motto is "We Believe All Can

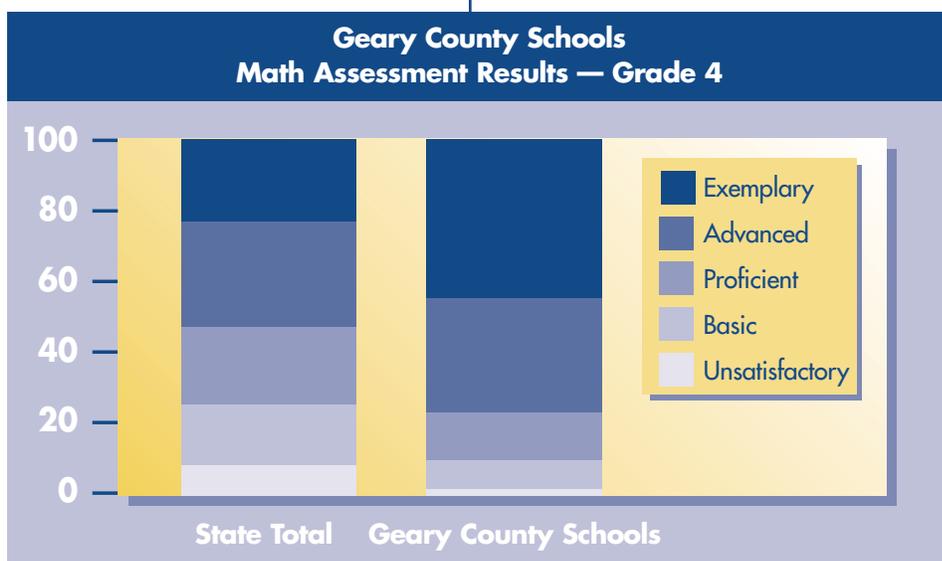
Achieve" and all members of the community are truly committed to this principle. Students in Geary County benefit from an excellent Board of Education, a supportive administration and dedicated teachers and principals. In addition, many parents and members of the community are interested in school issues and are willing volunteers.

In the 2002–2003 school year, 11 of 13 Geary County elementary schools met the Kansas Standard of Excellence. The Standard of Excellence is awarded to schools that meet or exceed criteria that define the percentage of students who achieve specific performance levels.

Five elementary schools in Geary County also received Challenge Awards from the Confidence in Kansas Public Education Task Force. Challenge Awards recognize Kansas schools that are making a significant difference in student achievement despite facing significant challenges in the school population.

Geary County schools have also been cited in national reports. The Education Trust, in the report *Dispelling the Myth Revisited*, identified "high-flying" schools, those that educate high-poverty level and highly diverse student populations and that also post very high levels of performance. Among the "high-flying"

In all, 90% of Grade 4 students in Geary County Schools scored at the Proficient level or higher on the 2003 Kansas Math Assessment. Fully 45% scored in the Exemplary category, compared to 23% of the state total.



schools identified nationwide were 5 Geary County schools.

Choosing Everyday Mathematics

Beginning in fall 1997, representatives from each elementary school joined with district curriculum leaders to form a committee to select a new mathematics curriculum. After reviewing the research, the math committee developed rubrics that it would use to evaluate the various math curricula. The program needed to be a rigorous curriculum that aligned with state and national standards, that was supported by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and that provided quality professional development.

Math committee members communicated these developments back to their schools so that all teachers in Geary County Schools were aware of and involved in the decision-making. In spring 1998, the math committee, with strong input from teachers, selected *Everyday Mathematics*.

Professional Development

Before the school year began, teachers in Geary County Schools had their first professional development presented by *Everyday Mathematics* consultants. Recalling those initial training sessions, Beth Hudson, the director of elementary education in the district, states, “The *Everyday Mathematics* consultants shared their strong mathematical knowledge with the teachers in the district. *Everyday Mathematics* consultants have consistently encouraged and supported Geary County Schools in a major commitment to professional development.”

Over the years, the extraordinary commitment to professional development has created a core group of *Everyday Mathematics* teacher leaders in each

school building. These teacher leaders serve as resources to provide an immediate response to teacher questions and concerns. Teachers were supported initially through a series of district-wide *Everyday Mathematics* meetings held at each grade level 2 to 3 times in the first year of implementation. At these meetings teachers consulted with each other on topics such as pacing, teaching strategies and classroom management.

New teachers to the district are provided training in the materials each year. In addition, the Geary County Schools offers ongoing professional development specific to mathematics. The Board of Education makes available all the necessary supporting manipulatives and materials for a successful implementation of *Everyday Mathematics*.

Support for Parents

“Even as we were beginning to implement *Everyday Mathematics*, we knew that we needed to build support for the program among parents,” recalls Hudson. A priority at each elementary school was hosting Family Math Nights where the *Everyday Mathematics* curriculum was presented and explained. In addition, parents and family members were encouraged to play the games in *Everyday Mathematics* at these sessions.

“Communication with parents, whether it be Home Links, math nights or brief notes, helps parents know what the children are doing in mathematics at school,” explains Hudson. “Parents begin to see the goals of *Everyday Mathematics* and can work to reinforce them at home.”

Efforts to connect parents with the *Everyday Mathematics* program continue in Geary County. A recent Family Math Night presentation that showed how *Everyday Mathematics*

“Professional development is critical to our success in mathematics. At the same time, professional development is a wonderful professional experience for our teachers.”

Beth Hudson,
Director of Elementary Education

is aligned with the Kansas Math Assessment was very well received by parents and the community.

Math Assessment Results

Student achievement in the Geary County Schools is noteworthy. On the 2003 Kansas Math Assessment, administered to elementary students in Grade 4, 45% of Geary County students scored in the Exemplary range, compared to 23% of all Grade 4 students in the state. An additional 32% of Grade 4 students scored in the Advanced range on the Math Assessment.

“The success in mathematics that we have achieved in Geary County Schools is the result of the entire community working together to support our students,” states Hudson. “We are fortunate to have the full support of the members of our Board of Education for *Everyday Mathematics*. So many teachers, administrators, parents and community members are dedicated to the success of the students in Geary County Schools. Truly, we believe all can achieve in Geary County Schools.”

For additional information on the *Everyday Mathematics* program, please contact us toll-free at 1-888-772-4543 and visit our Web site at www.WrightGroup.com.

Meeting All Expectations