Math scores are soaring at Ka‘ala Elementary School in Wahiawa, a military town near the center of the island of Oahu, thanks to a group of dedicated teachers using Everyday Mathematics® in Grades K–5.

Math scores on the Hawaii State Assessment (HSA) have grown significantly in just two years with Everyday Mathematics. Between the 2005-2006 school year (before the program was being used) to the 2007-2008 school year (after two years of Everyday Mathematics instruction), the percentage of students reaching Proficient in math has increased by 42 percentage points, from 12% to 54%.

Students classified as low socioeconomic also increased by 41.8 percentage points, from 9.2% to 50%. In addition, English learners increased by 21 percentage points from 6% to 28%. This accomplishment was achieved with the assistance of the research-based Everyday Mathematics program from Wright Group/McGraw-Hill, which was adopted in Grades K–5 at the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year.

“In the first weeks of implementation, students were energized and focused on learning math like they had not been before. In the past two years student math achievement has skyrocketed, and our monthly benchmark assessments indicate that it will jump up again significantly on our April 2009 Hawaii State Assessment,” said Ka‘ala Elementary School Vice Principal Teri Boucher Thorstad.

Chad Shibayama, a Grade 5 teacher, says the curriculum helps produce these scores because “Everyday Mathematics does a great job of scaffolding the skills throughout the grade levels. The way the program is designed to ‘come back’ to previously taught skills assisted my students in building a better foundation.”

Outscoring the State Average

In 2008, Grade 5 students at the school outscored the state average in math on the HSA by 14 percentage points. Most of the school’s students (85%) are qualified as low socioeconomic and 25% are English learners. About 79% of the students are Asian/Pacific Islander, 13% Caucasian, 5% Hispanic, 2% African American, and less than 1% American Indian.

“We adopted Everyday Mathematics under the recommendation of Complex Area Superintendent Patricia Park,” said Boucher Thorstad “Since, our students’ math growth has been tremendous.”
Superintendent Park listed many reasons she recommended *Everyday Mathematics*:

- It is a research-based model for improving math concepts and skills for all children and diverse learners.
- It has a comprehensive, sequential and conceptual learning approach to acquiring mathematics skills.
- It features distributive practice of math concepts. If a learner didn’t master it within a unit of study, lessons continue, moving onto the next theme or concept. This ensures a return to prior themes for additional opportunities to master, practice and/or expand math skills and concepts.
- It aligns units of study that can be observable in all grades, applicable school-wide and appropriate for all learners.
- The skills and concepts are developed with thematic orientation, delivered via appropriate grade-level lessons and activities.
- It emphasizes vocabulary building, thinking skills development, and relevance.
- It offers a coaching team of support personnel to provide consistency of program implementation and classroom practices across all grade levels.

In addition to the district recommendation, Ka’ala had a team visit other *Everyday Mathematics* implementation sites, talk to administrators and teachers about the program, and see it in action. Teachers reviewed the program’s grade-level goals and compared them to Hawaii State Standards. Ultimately, school leaders and teachers agreed the program “fit with our student population and our student achievement goals,” Boucher Thorstad said.

Parents also are seeing the effects. “My child has always excelled in reading, but since Ka’ala implemented *Everyday Mathematics*, my child’s math scores have consistently exceeded her reading, and her confidence has grown,” said Pearla Kesolei.

Perhaps the best compliment Mr. Sulser offered is that the greatest benefit of *Everyday Mathematics* is students can use the skills they have learned.

For additional information on the *Everyday Mathematics* program, please contact us toll-free at 1-800-648-2970 and visit our Web site at www.EverydayMath.com.