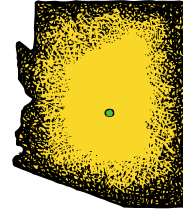


A+ Success Story



Whatever It Takes

Payson Center for Success High School Gets an “A+” Using A+® Courseware

At Payson Center for Success High School (PCS) (Payson, Ariz.), when it comes to helping students learn and achieve, the staff motto is, “we will do whatever it takes.” For PCS’s Principal, Kathe Ketchem, that motto is more than a mere slogan—it’s a call to action. It’s one of the main reasons that the school has been a long-time user of *A+nyWhere Learning System*® (*A+LS*™) courseware program from American Education Corporation (AEC). PCS’s results-driven environment is powered by *A+LS* courseware, a network-based, e-learning instruction courseware program that contains more than 5,400 lessons and over 200,000 content pages of research and objective-based, problem-solving, K-12 courseware—plus assessment, alignment, and curriculum management tools.

According to Ketchem, through the use of *A+LS*, student coursework is designed according to student interests, aptitude, past history, and need for individual pacing to develop and demonstrate competence in academic subjects. Upon entry, each Payson student is provided with a personal education plan, flexible scheduling, and community-based work, life, and career skills. “It doesn’t matter what level students are working at, because *A+LS* allows us to adjust the coursework to match the level they are on,” says Ketchem. “*A+LS* fosters mastery learning, which means we know the students have really learned the material in a comprehensive way.”

“The tool helps us discover what skills the student has or lacks.”

— KATHE KETCHEM,
PRINCIPAL, PAYSON CENTER FOR SUCCESS
HIGH SCHOOL, AZ

Promise and Vision

PCS is unique as a charter school; it is one of the few schools in Arizona to be chartered by the local school district. PCS is designed to use the Payson community as a partner in providing

At a Glance

School Location: Payson, Arizona

Challenge: Decrease dropout rates and increase success for at-risk students

Solution: Network-based use of *A+LS* that is customized to each student’s personal education plan

Result: PCS was recently selected as an Arizona A+ Exemplary school by the Arizona Educational Foundation

meaningful educational experiences for students who have not been successful in the traditional academic environment. Since first opening its doors to Payson students in 1996, PCS has lived up to its promise and vision of providing a coordinated program of core academic instruction, mastery learning, counseling, technical training, and experiential learning to ensure improvement in achievement for challenged youth.

Dropout recovery has been and continues to be the goal and targeted population for Payson Center for Success High School. The majority of PCS students are one or more years behind in credits at the time of enrollment due to at-risk factors such as chronic attendance problems, sporadic enrollment, and lack of academic performance and/or behavioral issues. Most were at-risk of failure in middle school or earlier.

PCS staff and students describe the school as “non-traditional,” offering a different educational delivery system directed at

developing independent, self-directed learners in a non-lecture, computer-assisted educational environment. “Typically,” says Ketchem, “our students need a differentiated program and more time to complete the standards for courses and graduation,” says Ketchem. “Through *A+LS*, all courses are offered all the time, so students do not have to ‘wait’ until a course is offered. Here, personal student education plans are designed to match each student’s goals, academic needs toward graduation and career focus, as well as individual skill and ability challenges.”

For example, according to Ketchem, when students arrive at the school behind in math, *A+LS* is used to full effect. “Using *A+LS*, we can assess their math ability and then take the requisite steps to remediate it,” she says. “The tool helps us discover what skills the student has or lacks. It enables us to slow down the learning process so they have time to comprehend basic math skills. *A+LS* gives us the flexibility to design a class to teach basic skills. Students can take that class before they move on. The courseware helps us specify and rebuild a student’s understanding of math. The flexibility inherent in *A+LS* allows us to move students ‘up’ or ‘down’ as needed. The courseware challenges them. It moves them smoothly through the assessment and learning process.”

According to Ketchem, *A+LS* also helps PCS students develop work ethics and responsibility in respect to productive learning environments. “The courseware has helped change the students’ perspective from ‘it’s the teacher’s job to teach me,’ to ‘I am responsible for learning,’” she adds.

Recently, for example, an enterprising 19-year-old PCS student demonstrated that ‘can do’ philosophy in his quest to excel at math. Ketchem explains, “The student was determined to get a degree in biogenetics. He needed to take and master all the upper-level math classes as well as physics and chemistry. *A+LS* was a big component in helping him to accomplish his academic goals and meet the requirements for college entrance. His is a great success story; he received a scholarship and is now attending college.”

With such great success, it’s little wonder that PCS was recently selected as an Arizona A+ Exemplary school by the Arizona Educational Foundation. “The Foundation came to PCS and examined our programs and syllabuses. They talked to students, parents, and community partners. There is a whole list of criteria—from academics to partnerships in the community—that they used to measure our capabilities. In the final analysis, we were selected as one of Arizona’s top schools.”

Ketchem doesn’t hesitate to share some of the credit for the award with *A+LS*. “The software has played a significant role in terms of student achievement. It gives students a tremendous sense of accomplishment. Because of *A+LS*, we are able to provide our students with individualized instruction. *A+LS* gives students immediate feedback and direction, and provides them with the individual attention they need. Clearly, *A+LS* has played a major role in our success.”

About The American Education Corporation (AEC)

Early recognition of the national trend in school accountability, combined with an understanding of the impact of the Internet on education, has allowed AEC to become an industry leader in e-learning solutions. Few education companies offer the systemized combination of formative assessment, proven instruction, alignment to standards, and data management and reporting capabilities of AEC’s comprehensive courseware and learning management system.

The *A+nyWhere Learning System*[®] (*A+LS*[™]) software program is an e-learning solution ideal for schools searching for more efficient ways to improve their instructional processes. The *A+LS* courseware program consists of an award-winning instructional management system supported by significant core curriculum content for grades K–12 and adult learners delivered through a local area network (LAN), a wide area network (WAN), or the Internet. The research-based curriculum content is in the subject areas of Reading, Mathematics, Language Arts, Science, Writing, and Social Sciences. This curriculum is linked to state standards and combined with valuable formative assessment tests designed to guide instruction throughout the school year — as well as give school administrators the data they need to ensure maximum student performance.

Would you like to learn more about the *A+nyWhere Learning System*?

Give us a call at 800.222.2811 to arrange a custom product demonstration with your local licensed product reseller or check us out on the web at www.amered.com