



Arkansas House Newsletter

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Arkansas AIMS Program is Best in Country in STEM Education

Not only is the Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math and Science working, it's the best program in the country for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education according to Ms. Tommy Sue Anthony, President of AAIMS. The Joint Committee on Education heard a promising update from Anthony on the state of the Arkansas AIMS program Monday.

Change the Equation, a non-profit organization of more than 100 Fortune 500 companies, recently selected AAIMS as the number one model for STEM education in the country, and has recommended it because of its proven success. In the program, students enroll in AP classes in science, math, and English, and then take AP exams in the spring. The AAIMS program provides "Super Saturday" sessions for students before the exams where instructors come in to help review concepts and prepare them for the exams. Then, if students pass the exams with qualifying scores—a 3, 4, or 5—they are rewarded with \$100 for each qualifying score. The program also provides professional development for teachers.

The results of the AAIMS program are hard to ignore. In the original nine AAIMS schools, there has been a 105% increase in the number of qualifying scores—from 531 in the 2007-2008 school year to 1089 in the 2011-2012 school year. In addition, these schools have seen an 85% increase in the number of students taking AP exams in math, science, and English. The next 13 schools, added one year after the charter AAIMS schools, have seen a 110% increase in their three years in the program. Group two schools saw an incredible 156% increase in the number of students taking a math, science, or English exam. Two more groups of schools have also been added, and they have also seen dramatic increases in qualifying scores—55% and 111%, respectively. In addition, they have also seen increases in the number of students choosing to take a math, science, or English AP exam—55% and 61% respectively, and these two schools have only had the

benefit of the program for two years.

As the legislature meets in January, this information will be extremely important to lawmakers as they decide how to appropriate the state's funds. The Arkansas AIMS program only has enough funding left for one year, the 2012-2013 school year.