



# Success Story

## State of Alabama

Department of Education Statistics

### Demographics:

- 1526 Public Schools
- 921 Elementary (1-5) Buildings
- 287,918 Elementary Students
- ▶ 59% White
- ▶ 39% Black
- ▶ 2.7% Hispanic
- ▶ 1 % Asian/Pacific
- ▶ .07 American Indian
- 61.2 % Free & Reduced Lunches

***"We were increasingly concerned about the lack of sportsmanship displayed in our youth sports, and this also affected classroom behavior and learning. Character education is not only a mandate in our state, but it is an investment in our young people."***

Representative Richard Lindsey  
39th District – Alabama  
Cherokee, Cleburne,  
and DeKalb  
Counties

***"STAR gives our students and coaches the necessary tools to build teams of great sportsmen and women."***

Dr. Joseph B. Morton  
State Superintendent of Education, Alabama

## The Challenge

The state of Alabama mandated a character education law, which required every child in Alabama to receive ten minutes per day of character education instruction. In addition, there was clearly a need to help families and schools deal with issues of poor sportsmanship. The Alabama State Legislature, Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools and State Superintendent of Education Joseph B. Morton took leadership roles in initiating state-sponsored access to a character and sportsmanship education program called *STAR Sportsmanship* - a web-based role-playing program created by *Learning Through Sports*.

## The Solution

The Elementary version of *STAR Sportsmanship* was selected for implementation in every fourth grade classroom throughout the state of Alabama. *Star* was selected for its real world scenarios focusing on four topics - Respect, Discipline, Teamwork, Choices, and STAR's proven methodology for delivering life-changing behaviors and attitudes.

## Instructional Design

*STAR Sportsmanship Elementary* is a fully animated online program designed to provide students in grades 3-5, the principles of sportsmanship as well as the thought processes of those who exhibit good sportsmanship behaviors. The instructional methodology employed throughout the program is modeling correct and incorrect behavior in given sports related simulations where students make choices and see the consequences. This methodology is well recognized in instructional theory and design research for attitudinal teaching (Bandura, 1969; Sharp & Gallimore, 1988; Gagne, 1985).



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*"We refer to the STAR topics during "teachable moments" to help us with problem-solving and critical thinking skills. As a result, the students are thinking more about cause and effect, and good behavior is on the rise.."*

Rita Buckner, Fourth Grade Teacher, Flat Rock Elementary, Jackson County Schools



Elementary



Middle School



High School



Coaches

## Research Methodology

Students in 181 fourth grade classrooms (5,068 students) responded to a questionnaire prior to entering the STAR Sportsmanship program. The 12 item survey was scenario-based, asking students how they would respond when faced with various sportsmanship decisions. The questionnaire was read aloud to the students, so even those with reading difficulties could participate.

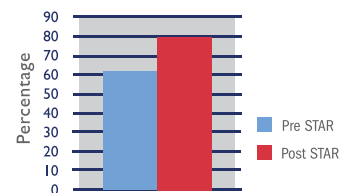
Following the survey, the students completed the web-based Elementary STAR Sportsmanship program under the direction of their classroom teacher, or in a computer lab.

The precise amount of time elapsing between administration of the pre-test or original questionnaire and the administration of the post-test using the same questionnaire is unknown, however it is clear that the time period was no more than 30 days.

## The Results

The average pre-test score on the original scenario-based questionnaire was 62.77. The average post-test score on the same questionnaire administered after students completed the Elementary STAR Sportsmanship program was 79.75. This translates to an overall gain of 16.98 points, or a 22% gain in identifying behaviors associated with decisions related to good sportsmanship.

Average Pre- and Post-Test Scores



## Models of Use

The implementation of STAR Sportsmanship has grown from a few schools to the expansion of usage throughout the state of Alabama. The most common implementation models include...

- Computer Labs
- Computers in the Classroom
- After-School Programs
- Home
- Whole Class Instruction
- Physical Education Classes
- Pre-Season Trainings



Learning Through Sports based in Birmingham, Ala., is an educational publisher creating interactive sports games to motivate and model learning. The company publishes *Kid's College*®, a web-based reading and math skill practice program for grades K-8, and *STAR Sportsmanship*, a web-based character development program for students in grades K-12.