



## LOCAL EDUCATION

### **YUHSD testing 'A+' school software**

BY SARAH REYNOLDS, SUN STAFF WRITER

Feb 6, 2007

Yuma Union High School District is piloting a new online curriculum system that teachers want to be an "A+" addition to the classroom.

The A+dvanced Learning System software, or A+, is being tested this year as a pilot project at Vista Alternative School. It will be introduced at all the district schools this fall, when the next school year begins.

It provides a Web-based curriculum that allows homebound students to do their class work on the Internet.

Prior to this, a teacher had to physically bring every lesson and piece of homework to homebound students.

"The versatility of the Web-based would allow us to have our students who are, say, chronically ill, to work at home," said Toni Badone, YUHSD associate superintendent of curriculum.

This is aimed at students who are homebound for long periods of time due to illness or other personal problems.

It can be used by those on long-term suspension and with discipline issues that make them unable to function in a regular classroom.

It also expands the curriculum of classes that can be offered over the Internet and lets teachers tailor lessons to specific students, said Timothy Alba, a computer technology liaison for the Yuma Educational Consortium.

"If a student ever had a problem during the school year, an attendance problem or a discipline problem, they can go over the stuff they missed and recover the credit," Alba said.

Alba also teaches English at Vista. He has been onsite to implement the A+ system since it was introduced in the classroom in January. He was on the committee that chose this program. He said the main factors for selecting it were its ability to reach homebound students and its accessibility.

A+ will replace the district's previous online course system, NovaNet. Alba said NovaNet did not offer access to course work over the Internet and did not have similar features.

"For example, (A+) has a text-aloud feature, which is a read-aloud feature," Alba said. "A student can highlight text and, with headphones, it will read it so they can hear it."

Alba said the text-aloud program works on any Web site or computer document. The software is slowly being introduced into classrooms as NovaNet is phased out this semester.

Vista Principal Chris Magdaleno said his school's unique place in the YUHSD system made it ideal to pilot this software. They deal with fewer students in a more concentrated environment with more individual instruction.

"The smaller size of our campus and being the alternative school, we're more flexible," Magdaleno said.

Jessica Arellano, 18, a senior at Vista, said so far A+ has been easier to use than NovaNet.

"I'm doing English on it," Arellano said. "I like this because you get to do it at home."

Badone said the goal is for all students to have access to this increased flexibility next year.

"What we looked at first was ... individualization, personalization and working with students who had many different needs," Badone said.

Sarah Reynolds can be reached at [sreynolds@yumasun.com](mailto:sreynolds@yumasun.com) or 539-6847.

© Copyright, YumaSun.com