

A+ Grades Up

A+ Grades Up provides students in grades K – 12 with high quality instruction in English Language Arts and mathematics. We also teach test-taking skills that help students improve their Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment and Accountability Program (ACTAAP) test scores. We have tutored more than 15,000 SES students during the past 7 years with 89% of our students demonstrating academic improvement as a result of our program. Students often start our program below grade level and many have learning disabilities and/or speak little English. Our materials and instructional strategies are research-based, aligned with the Arkansas Content Standards in reading and mathematics, aligned with the National Reading Panel and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and have been proven to cause significant growth. Our instructional strategies (small group and individual learning, time-on-task, systematic learning, use of manipulatives, scaffolding and direct instruction) have been scientifically proven to help increase academic achievement for students with special needs, English language learners, low-income and at-risk students.

Students are not required to provide any instructional materials. The materials provided for students in our ELA program include: Kindergarten - Continental Press, Sounds and Letters; More Sounds and Letters; Lakeshore Journal, Early Skills Journal; Grades 1 – 8 - Continental Press, Phonics and Word Study; Finish Line Reading; Grades 9 – 12 - Great Source, Source Book; Vocabulary for Achievement. Continental Press ELA materials emphasize print, phonological and phonemic awareness as well as activities to develop early language skills. Each book features skill review, independent practice, and graphic organizers (ie time lines, diagrams, charts, etc). Additional emphases include word analysis basics such as phonics, syllabication, affixes, root words, contractions, possessives, synonyms, antonyms, homophones, and dictionary use. The materials provided for students in our math program include: Grades K – 2 - Continental Press, Basic Math; Skills, Concepts and Problem Solving; Focus on Problem Solving; Grades 3 – 8 - Continental Press, Finish Line Math; Skills, Concepts and Problem Solving; Focus on Problem Solving; Grades 9 – 12 - Garlic Press, Algebra. Continental Press math materials include single-skill lessons that give students the repetition and reinforcement they need to achieve mastery. Every book has a comprehensive post-test divided into three parts (multiple choice, short constructed response, and extended constructed response).

With A+ Grades Up, parents/families can choose individual or small-group tutoring. We provide all tutoring in-person immediately following regular school hours and on weekends. Our instruction is offered at students' schools, in-home and at neighborhood-based sites such as religious institutions, community centers and public libraries. We do not provide transportation, but we minimize the need for student travel by offering a range of locations at or near students' schools and in-home. Parents/families are responsible for any transportation required.

A+ Grades Up SES instruction is provided by tutors who are qualified and experienced working with low-income students, students with disabilities and English language learners. More than 90% of our tutors are state certified. All of our highly qualified tutors have a minimum of a bachelor's degree and relevant teaching experience with low-income students and students performing below grade level. Professional certifications held by our tutors include: State Teacher Certification, Special Education; Transitional Bilingual; Reading Specialist; General Education; Early Childhood Education; Elementary Education; Secondary Education.

A+ Grades Up SES instruction has proven to be effective across all grades and for a broad range of student populations. Over the course of the 2008/2009 school year, our students showed improvement from pre- to post-test of 9.5% in reading and 13.5% in math. Over the course of the 2007/2008 school year, our students showed improvement from pre- to post-test of 7.4% in reading and 13.5% in math. During the 2008/2009 school year, we tutored 59 students with disabilities and 141 LEP/ELL students. In reading, improvement from pre- to post-test for students with disabilities in our program was 20.81%; improvement for English language learners was 7.87%. In mathematics, improvement for students with disabilities in our program was 8.02%; improvement for English language learners was 10.56%. A+ Grades Up is a for-profit organization.

<p><i>Time when services are proposed to be offered</i></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Before school <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> After school <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Weekends <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Summer <input type="checkbox"/> Other (describe)</p>	<p><i>Student/instructor ratio</i></p> <p>List the ratio of instructors to children in the proposed program Average student/instructor ratio: 5/1</p> <p>Maximum number of students for each instructor (not to exceed 10 students per instructor) Maximum student/instructor ratio: 8/1</p>
<p><i>Cost per hour (not to exceed current maximum allowable from RFA)</i> \$50.00</p>	<p><i>Approximate number of hours required for proposed tutoring</i> 30 hours</p>
<p><i>Minimum number of students that will be served in a single district</i> 25</p> <p><i>Minimum number of students that will be served in a single school or setting</i> 20</p>	<p><i>Will students be transported by this provider?</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p><i>Provider Contact Information:</i> Contact Person Name: Dave Martin Street Address: 2600 Linda Lane, Suite 8 City, State, Zip: Edmond, OK 73013 Contact telephone number: (866) 502-4723 Contact fax number: (405) 608-0769 Email: dave.martin@grades-up.com Website: www.grades-up.com Hours of operation: 9am – 5pm</p>	

Indicate Arkansas School Districts in which this applicant provided SES services for any child during the 2008-2009 academic year.

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- McGehee
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- Mineral Springs
- Monticello
- Mount Ida
- Mt. Vernon Enola
- Mountain Home
- Mountain Pine
- Mountain View
- Mountainburg
- Mulberry/
Pleasant View
- Murfreesboro
- Nashville
- Nemo Vista
- Nettleton
- Nevada
- Newport
- Norfolk
- Norphlet
- North Little Rock
- Omaha
- Osceola
- Ouachita
- Ouachita River
- Ozark
- Ozark Mountain
- Palestine Wheatley
- Pangburn
- Paragould
- Paris
- Parkers Chapel
- Pea Ridge
- Perryville
- Piggott
- Pine Bluff
- Pocahontas
- Pottsville
- Poyen
- Prairie Grove
- Prescott
- Pulaski County
Special
- Quitman
- Rector
- Riverside
- Riverview
- Rogers
- Rose Bud
- Russellville
- Salem
- Scranton
- Searcy
- Searcy County
- Sheridan
- Shirley
- Siloam Springs
- Sloan Hendrix
- Smackover
- South Conway
County
- South Mississippi
County
- South Side (Bee
Branch)
- Southside
(Batesville)
- Spring Hill
- Springdale
- Star City
- Stephens
- Strong Huttig
- Stuttgart
- Texarkana
- Trumann
- Turrell
- Twin Rivers
- Two Rivers
- Valley Springs
- Valley View
- Van Buren
- Van Cove
- Vilonia
- Viola
- Waldron
- Warren
- Watson Chapel
- Weiner
- West Fork
- West Memphis
- West Side
- Western Yell
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(Hartman)
- Westside
Consolidated
- White County
Central
- White Hall
- Wickes
- Wonderview
- Woodlawn
- Wynne
- Yellville Summit

Indicate the Arkansas School Districts in which SES services are proposed for the 2009-2010 academic year.

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- Murfreesboro
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- Nemo Vista
- Nettleton
- Nevada
- Newport
- Norfolk
- Norphlet
- North Little Rock
- Omaha
- Osceola
- Ouachita
- Ouachita River
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- Salem
- Scranton
- Searcy
- Searcy County
- Sheridan
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- Siloam Springs
- Sloan Hendrix
- Smackover
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- South Mississippi
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- Southside
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Central
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- Wonderview
- Woodlawn
- Wynne
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Narrative Description of Program

A+ Grades Up has provided SES in English language arts (ELA) and math to more than 15,000 K-12 students during the past 7 years. Our tutors have experience teaching students of varying ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds who are working below grade level, like many of the students who attend schools that qualify for SES. More than 90% of our tutors are state certified. All of our highly qualified tutors have a minimum of a bachelor's degree and relevant teaching experience with low-income students and students performing below grade level. Our tutors receive six hours of training on policies, procedures and curriculum (see III H). We have proven success with English language learners and students with ADD/ADHD. Students receive individualized lesson plans tailored to their instructional level. 89% of our students demonstrate growth and 82% of our students show statistically significant improvement.

Our SES program is provided at safe, familiar and convenient facilities that allow for a critical mass of eligible students and a favorable learning environment. We prefer to contract with districts/schools to offer SES on-site at students' schools providing a convenient location for students with limited means of transportation and enhancing our connection to students' classroom instruction. When district/school facilities are not available or other facilities are preferable, we offer our program at public libraries, community centers and religious institutions.

We use the Achieve Test as a pre- and post-test to identify students' achievement gaps and measure progress in ELA or math. Each question on the Achieve Test is aligned to the Arkansas Content Standards (ACS). Students' test answers are scored using our software program, which creates reports based on students' answers that identify demonstrated skill gaps and recommends program goals that are derived from the ACS; this report is the basis of the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) that we present to the LEA and parents/guardians. Our education management team—

including tutors, lead tutors, site coordinators and regional managers—examines each student’s pre-test report and any other academic data made available to us by the LEA or parents/guardians, such as ACTAAP scores, IEPs and 504 Plans. The outcome of the pre-testing and ILP creation process determine each student’s placement in our program. Upon program completion, students take the Achieve Test as a post-test so that we may accurately measure students’ growth as a result of our program.

Our program is based on a scientific foundation that includes research-proven instructional strategies such as a systematic learning approach, use of manipulatives, time-on-task, scaffolding, direct instruction and the option of either small group or 1:1 instruction. We provide students with all equipment and instructional materials that are required to participate in our program. Our program is research-based, aligned with ACS and proven to cause significant growth. The materials we provide for students in our ELA program include: Kindergarten: Continental Press(CP), Sounds and Letters; More Sounds and Letters; Lakeshore Journal, Early Skills Journal; Grades 1 – 8: CP, Phonics and Word Study, Finish Line Reading; Grades 9 – 12: Great Source, Source Book, Vocabulary for Achievement. Our ELA materials address the NRP principles: Phonemic awareness; Phonics instruction; Fluency; Vocabulary; Comprehension.

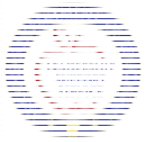
The materials A+ Grades Up provides for students in our math program include: Grades K – 2 - CP, Basic Math, Skills, Concepts and Problem Solving; Focus on Problem Solving; Grades 3 – 8 - CP, Finish Line Math Skills, Concepts and Problem Solving, Focus on Problem Solving; Grades 9 – 12 - Garlic Press, Algebra. Our materials for math address the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics’ process standards: Problem solving; Reasoning and proof; Communication; Connections; Representation.

We engage parents/families and school/district staff at every step of the process, from pre-

testing and ILP creation to progress reporting to post-test score reporting. We offer the choice of small group instruction or one-on-one instruction on-site or in-home for their child and their preferred days for instructional sessions, making our program more accessible to students with working parents/families or without reliable transportation. We communicate student progress to parents/families, teachers, school and district staff in accordance with NCLB and FERPA confidentiality provisions. Written progress reports are delivered to parents/guardians via U.S. mail or hand delivery and to school staff via e-mail, US Mail or hand delivery monthly.

Our strategies to evaluate program quality and effectiveness include on-site observations and data collection and tracking. Site coordinators perform scheduled and unscheduled observations of tutors on a regular basis to ensure program fidelity. Tutors enter student information into our secure, online SES software system regularly, facilitating effective and efficient reporting. We evaluate overall program effectiveness by administering surveys to parents/families, program instructors, schools and districts. We will use the required Parent Survey Form to solicit parent/family feedback within 5 days of the end of service provision or upon the denial of services, whichever comes first. We will provide parents/guardians with a stamped envelope pre-addressed to the Arkansas Department of Education in which to return that survey.

At program's start, each parent/family is given our written complaint policy and procedure, which includes our Arkansas contact information. Parent/family complaints initially handled by the appropriate site coordinator. If not resolved at this level, the complaint will be addressed by our regional manager. We communicate with district personnel to ensure that our program and tutors are in compliance and that students are receiving the best instruction possible. We will further comply with all district regulations regarding the handling of complaints and communication to the district. We respond to all complaints within 24 hours of receipt.



Section III: Indicators of Quality

A. Evidence of Links Between Research & Program Design

1. A+ Grades Up's instructional practices are high quality, research-based, aligned with the Arkansas Content Standards and based on the fundamental findings of the National Reading Panel (NRP) and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM). Our program is highly structured and designed to increase the academic achievement of students performing below grade level by presenting materials and skills thoughtfully, sequentially and systematically; this helps facilitate quality control and accurate monitoring of students' progress. Our materials include Arkansas standards-based practice tests and test-taking strategies to prepare students for ACTAAP. Our instructional strategies for ELA and math include:

Systematic Learning Approach is highly effective with low-income and at-risk students, special education students and limited English proficient students. This is the best approach to use with at-risk students because it involves careful sequencing to gradually build skills, allowing opportunities to practice skills being taught. A critical component of early reading instruction is explicit teaching to build phonemic awareness and decoding skills, fluency in word recognition, comprehension strategies and oral language vocabulary. Explicit instruction and opportunities for extended practice with phonemically decodable texts have been shown to be particularly beneficial for at-risk readers because it involves careful sequencing to gradually build skills, giving students an opportunity to practice the skills being taught. Programs such as

ours that emphasize systematic phonics and reading for meaning in vocabulary-controlled text produce superior achievement compared to mainstream basal readers. Systematic phonics instruction produces significant benefits for students with reading disabilities.

(C.C. Block, *Comprehension Instruction: Research-Based Best Practices*, 2001)

Manipulatives, which offer students hands-on experience in learning new math and reading concepts, were proven—in a review of 14 studies by the National Center for Accessing the General Curriculum—to have a positive effect on student achievement. The effect was consistent across the board, but especially evident for high-risk students, SWDs and ELLs. (R. Ruzic, “Manipulatives”, *Enhancement Literature Review*, 2001)

Time-on-Task for students with reading and behavioral problems enhances skills and leads to meaningful increases in engagement of learning tasks. Studies of time-on-task in math show that the more time students spend studying math, the more improvement they show from one year to the next. (S. Gest, “Reading Tutoring for Students at Academic and Behavioral Risk: Effects on Time-on-Task in the Classroom”, *Education & Treatment of Children*, 2005)

Scaffolding is a temporary support mechanism in which the tutor provides initial assistance to complete tasks. As the student’s proficiency increases, the instructor’s support is gradually removed. Scaffolding includes clues to break a problem down into smaller steps allowing the student to grow in independence as a learner. Scaffolding provides clear direction and purpose of instruction, keeps students on task, reduces uncertainty and builds momentum. (J. McKenzie, “Scaffolding for Success”, *Now On: The Educational Technology Journal*, 1999)

National Reading Panel (NRP) Guidelines: A+ Grades Up’s instructional materials systematically walk students through the 5 pillars of reading instruction components as determined by the NRP. (1) **Phonemic Awareness Instruction**: We teach students to isolate,

identify and categorize phonemes using the letters of the alphabet before moving on to blending, segmentation and phoneme deletion, addition and substitution. **(2) Phonics Instruction:** We incorporate research-based instructional approaches including analogy-based, synthetic, phonics-through-spelling and onset-rime phonics instruction. **(3) Fluency:** We offer repeated oral reading of texts with feedback, and students follow along as texts are read by fluent readers. **(4) Vocabulary:** Using explicit instruction we teach words and word-learning strategies; students learn to recognize and derive meaning from word parts and use context clues. **(5) Text Comprehension:** We use strategies such as monitoring comprehension, recognizing story structure, and summarizing what has been read; we use modeling and guided practice while pairing fiction and non-fiction texts of similar topics.

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) Guidelines: A+ Grades Up's tutoring program is designed to follow NCTM's Process Standards. **(1) Problem Solving:** Students solve problems in diverse contexts, using a broad range of strategies. **(2) Reasoning and Proof:** Students learn to make and investigate mathematical conjectures, develop and evaluate mathematical arguments and proofs, and select various types of reasoning and methods of proof. **(3) Communication:** Using small group instruction, A+ Grades Up teaches students to organize/consolidate their thinking; communicate their thinking coherently; analyze/evaluate the mathematical thinking/strategies of others; and use mathematical language to express their ideas precisely. **(4) Connections:** Using metacognition, we enable our students to recognize and use connections among mathematical ideas; understand how mathematical ideas interconnect and build on one another to produce a coherent whole; and recognize and apply mathematics in contexts outside of mathematics. **(5) Representation:** Students create representations to organize, record, and communicate mathematical ideas; representations are used to model and

interpret physical, social, and mathematical phenomena.

2. A+ Grades Up offers small group instruction of 5 - 8 students per instructor and one-on-one instruction – all in-person with highly qualified tutors. **SMALL GROUP:** By working in small groups, students feel comfortable with speculating, questioning, exploring materials, explaining concepts in order to clarify their thinking and considering other students' perspectives (Griffiths 1999). The small group also provides the instructor the time to work separately with each student and tailor instruction to match students' individual needs. Small group sizes are vital to supporting students in acquiring the skills and strategies they need to achieve academic success. The interactivity of small groups engages students in their own learning, promoting speculation and explanation of concepts to clarify their thoughts. Small groups improve self-confidence and interpersonal communication. Griffiths, S., "Teaching and Learning in Small Groups." A Handbook for Teaching and Learning, H Fry, et al, eds., London and Sterling VA, Kogan Page Ltd ., 1999. **ONE-ON-ONE:** One-on-one instruction proves especially beneficial for students who require fewer distractions. Each student receives personal instruction depending on his/her exact needs. This could include bilingual instruction, special pacing, lessons matched to students' exact academic needs, and sessions scheduled in a way that fits into each students' lifestyle. All of these techniques ensure that our program maintains consistent effectiveness. Students receive immediate feedback and personal attention in their studies while tutors guide them through assignment revisions until a mastery level has been obtained. One-on-One Instruction for low-achieving or at-risk students has strong positive effects on student achievement. (P. Lauer, *The Effectiveness of Out-of-School-Time Strategies in Assisting Low-Achieving Students in Reading and Mathematics: A Research Synthesis*, 2004)

B. Links Between Program Design and NRP, NCTM, NSTA standards

Evidence of Links Between Research and Program Design

Reading

Dimensions of Reading	Components of the Supplemental Educational Services Provider's Instructional Program
Phonemic Awareness Instruction	A+ Grades Up utilizes multi-modality activities to build student awareness for phonemes. Students learn to isolate, identify and categorize phonemes using the letters of the alphabet before moving on to blending, segmentation and phoneme deletion, addition and substitution.
Phonics Instruction	A+ Grades Up uses systematic and explicit instruction in teaching alphabetic knowledge and reading. We incorporate research-based instructional approaches including analogy-based, synthetic, phonics-through-spelling and onset-rime phonics instruction.
Fluency	A+ Grades Up programs include repeated oral reading of texts with feedback. Students also follow along as texts are read by fluent readers. One-on-one reading with fluent readers and structured practice for building fluency increases reading independence.
Vocabulary	A+ Grades Up uses explicit instruction to teach individual words and word-learning strategies. We teach students to learn to recognize and derive meaning from word parts and use context clues.
Text Comprehension	A+ Grades Up uses strategies such as monitoring comprehension, recognizing story structure and summarizing what has been read in teaching comprehension. We use modeling and guided practice while pairing fiction and non-fiction texts of similar topics.
Other	

Evidence of Links Between Research and Program Design

Mathematics

Mathematical Process Standards	Components of the Supplemental Educational Services Provider's Instructional Program
Problem Solving	A+ Grades Up students build mathematical knowledge through problem solving but solving problems that are shared by mathematics and other contexts. A broad range of strategies are used to solve problems before reflecting on the process of mathematical problem solving.
Reasoning and Proof	A+ Grades Up teaches reasoning and proof as critical elements of mathematics. Our students learn to make and investigate mathematical conjectures, develop and evaluate mathematical arguments and proofs, and select various types of reasoning and methods of proof.
Communication	A+ Grades Up uses Small Group and one-on-one instruction proven to promote increased peer interaction. Students grow more comfortable questioning and explaining concepts to clarify their thinking process and consider other perspectives, increasing coherent mathematical thinking.
Connections	A+ Grades Up uses metacognition to help students recognize and apply mathematics in other contexts and to understand how mathematical ideas interconnect. Metacognitive “thinking about thinking” encourages planning, monitoring, evaluating & adapting cognitive strategies while the student is learning.
Representation	A+ Grades Up students learn to create representations to organize, record and

	communicate mathematical ideas. Representations are used to model and interpret physical, social and mathematical phenomena.
Other	

C. Connection to State Academic Standards and School or School District's Instructional Program(s)

1. Describe how the program connects to specific state academic standards.

When possible, cite the specific standards the program addresses.

We ensure our program is connected to the Arkansas Content Standards (ACS) by (1) Using a pre-test that is aligned to the ACS which guides us to select goals for the student that are derived from the ACS; (2) Using ACS-aligned curricula in which each lesson is based on an ACS; and (3) Preparing lesson plans for our tutors that are based on the ACS derived student goals and that direct all instruction using only our ACS-aligned curricula. A comprehensive demonstration of the correlation of our curricula's correlation to the ACS is available, but not included due to space restrictions. We routinely review the alignments of the Achieve Test, curricula and lesson plans to the ACS to be sure that the most current version of the ACS is being used. An example of our ELA materials' alignment to the ACS are below.

CONTENT STANDARD AR.10. Reading: Variety of text: Students shall read, examine, and respond to a wide range of texts for a variety of purposes.

STUDENT LEARNING EXPECTATION R.10.6.11. Reading a variety of poetry for enjoyment, critical analysis and evaluation: Read a variety of poetry, with emphasis on narrative, including ballads.

CORRELATION: *Finish Line: Reading: Level F: Chapter 06: Drawing*

Conclusions; Chapter 10: Understanding Point of View and Tone; Chapter 11:

Analyzing Language

An example of our math program's alignment to the ACS are below.

STRAND: MEASUREMENT, STANDARD 13: SYSTEMS OF

MEASUREMENT: Students shall identify and use units, systems and processes of measurement; Attributes and Tools M.13.6.2: Determine which unit of measure or measurement tool matches the context for a problem situation

CORRELATION: *Finish Line: Math: Level F: Unit 4: Measurement: Lesson 04-1: Units of Measurement; Lesson 04-2: Perimeter and Area; Lesson 04-3: Scale Drawings; Lesson 04-R: Measurement Review; Unit 5: Geometry and Spatial Sense: Lesson 05-1: Geometric Concepts*

Full alignments available upon request – not provided due to space restrictions.

2. A+ Grades Up ensures that our instruction and content is coordinated with the student's school program by using curriculum that is fully aligned to the ACS. By operating with a curriculum directly linked to the ACS, we ensure our efforts directly coordinate with the instructional programs of the school districts. For example North Little Rock (and many other districts in Arkansas) provides district-wide teacher training in their instructional program Early Literacy Learning in Arkansas (ELLA). ELLA is a curriculum for literacy that includes a balanced literacy approach with explicit instruction in the essential components of a K-3 reading program: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary,

comprehension, and writing process. Our curriculum is based on those same National Reading Panel principals. Additionally, ELLA calls for high standards based on the Arkansas Content Standards (ACS); our curriculum is fully aligned to the ACS. ELLA also calls for accountability for student progress; our program provides ongoing formal and informal assessments.

Additionally, and more generally, we work closely with parents/guardians and district during the goal-setting process to ensure students' experiences during the regular school day and the instruction we provide are coordinated. Our program accommodates the needs of any given district, and we collaborate with districts to ensure that the content of our SES program is complimentary to that which students receive during the school day. Continual assessment initiatives, such as ongoing testing results and formative and summative progress reports, are shared with the district, parents/guardians and schools, in a further effort to have an open, on-going process of coordination of school day and after-school learning. A+ Grades Up has a policy of hiring certified teachers, preferably those who work in the schools and districts where we provide SES. This cross-over helps us to maintain a connection between the instruction provided in our program and the daily classroom experience of students. We will continuously communicate with school staff to ensure our work is closely linked to what they are doing.

In order to accommodate special education students, we assign them to instructors who are experienced in working with learning disabilities. We can

also make accommodations for extra tutoring sessions, or more time working one-on-one with our instructors. We comply with students' IEPs and 504 plans. Although special education students are originally placed at their appropriate instructional level among mainstream students, special accommodations will be made as necessary. If daily classroom observation reveals that a special education student would benefit from either adding an aid, moving to a different class or being placed in a one-on-one setting, the proper adjustments are made after consultation with parents/guardians and the district.

3. The required instructional materials that we use in our SES program are integral to our instruction. The materials are assigned based on students' performance on the ACS-aligned Achieve Test pre-test. Lesson plans are prepared for tutors which reference only the ACS-aligned instructional materials we authorize. Our instructional materials and lesson plans are packaged individually for each student and are shipped to regional managers who then distribute them to tutors. Tutors are not allowed to use any materials other than those with which we supply them. We place a high value on the blend of curricula we have developed over the years and know that the integrity and success of the program are largely dependent on the use of this ACS-, NRP- and NCTM-aligned material.

4. There are no costs to the parents/families of students related to the student's participation in our program.

D. Monitoring Student Progress

1. a) Students' specific needs are assessed/diagnosed and skill gaps identified based on Achieve Test (AT) pre-test results in ELA or math. Each question on the AT is aligned to the Arkansas Content Standards. Students' test answers are keyed into our SES DMS, which automatically scores them and identifies each student's skill gaps. Each question that was answered incorrectly on the test will trigger a goal that is derived from the Arkansas Content Standards. Our education management team—including tutors, lead tutors, site coordinators and regional managers—examines this report and any other academic data available, such as ACTAAP scores, IEPs and 504 Plans. They use results to create ILP goals that are SMART: Specific (based on skill gaps and drawn from the Arkansas content standards), Measurable (progress toward specific skill achievement can be measured), Achievable (goals in appropriate range), Relevant (goals based on students' achievement gaps) and Time-based (length of time needed to achieve a skill).

b) Our tutors continuously track student progress and determine skill mastery or if re-teaching needs to occur by following a daily lesson plan, which outlines specific instructional goals and strategies based on test results and ILP goals. Lesson plans guide tutors in addressing the common needs of the group and the unique instructional needs of each student. When a student completes

his/her daily lesson, the tutor reviews it with the student to ensure that the review process is also a learning experience. Tutors then provide immediate feedback and makes progress notes. Lesson plans are updated on a daily basis to ensure that tutors continue to emphasize critical skills. The daily progress notes inform the monthly written progress reports that parents, schools and LEAs receive.

c) Our instructional staff consults with students' parents/guardians, classroom teachers and school administrators to further develop ILP goals to establish an instructional program that is designed to meet the student's individual needs. We emphasize collaboration between our instructional staff and each student's family, teacher(s) and school in creating an ILP that explicitly states the student's instructional level, skills to be improved and specific achievement goals within those skills. We accurately determining an appropriate program with specific achievement goals for students based on their current academic needs and feedback from parents/guardians and teachers.

2. Our process to evaluate, monitor and track student progress occurs on a daily, monthly and program-length basis. Student progress is measured against AT pre-test scores in ELA or math and ILP goals established based on pre-test results, input from parents/families, input from school personnel and other academic data such as 504 plans and ACTAAP scores.

On a daily basis, tutors use lesson plans to measure student progress on specific assignments and sub-skills. Lesson plans are used to keep track of the

specific needs and progress towards achieving academic goals on an individualized basis. On a monthly basis, tutors send out monthly written progress reports, consistently providing all parties with relevant information of the student's advancement. Progress reports are delivered either in person or via U.S. Mail to parents/guardians, by tutors or by staff at our corporate headquarters. Progress reports are e-mailed or sent via U.S. Mail to schools and districts. Progress reports will outline ILP goals, achievement, attendance and tutor comments regarding participation and progress within our program. All questions or concerns by parents/families are answered and addressed by the tutor and/or site coordinator who are available daily. Parents/families are contacted by telephone as needed to discuss students' progress or any other issues that may arise, such as poor attendance or behavioral issues.

Once the program is completed, pre-and post-test scores are compared to identify the academic achievement gains and progress made by each student. At this point, we issue a final progress report that addresses each student's percentage gains from pre-test to post-test. We actively communicate student progress to parents/guardians, teachers, and school and district staff in accordance with NCLB and FERPA confidentiality provisions.

E. Evidence of Effectiveness

1. Analysis of quantitative data from our 2007/08 and 2008/09 academic intervention programs by Litzenberger Consulting, an outside third party evaluator, has provided evidence that our instructional program is effective in improving students' academic performance in math and English language arts. The third party study used two evaluation perspectives to assess our program. First is a comparison of pre- and post-test measures over this two year period for each content area. This defines the total program effectiveness analysis. Second is the same evaluation perspective for each grade level at which instruction was offered.

The Achieve Test reported results as percent correct. This is a testing metric that produces ordinal level scores, and a non-parametric statistic was selected to determine the level of significance in gain scores. The Two-Related-Samples Tests procedure compares the distributions of two variables. Significance levels based on student gains for each of the two years were highly significant beyond the .001 level in both reading and math, meaning these differences would happen by chance less than one time in a thousand observations. Significance levels varied slightly on the grade level analysis in part because the smaller numbers of students, a critical determinant in statistical analyses of this type. High levels of significance were common in reading at early elementary grade levels in reading

with grades K through 4 and grade 6 meeting the .05 level of significance in year one and all grades K through 5 in year two. In math seven of the grade level analyses met the .05 standard in year one and two in year two.

Litzenberger Consulting determined that our program meets the statistical standards to be classified as a highly effective program in both reading and mathematics. The complete report by Litzenberger Consulting is available upon request.

A+ Grades Up's SES instruction has proven to be effective across all grades and for a broad range of student populations. Over the course of the 2008/2009 school year, students in our reading program showed average improvement from pre- to post-test for 9.5%, and the average improvement in math was 13.5%. Over the course of the 2007/2008 school year, students in our reading program showed average improvement from pre- to post-test for 7.4%, and the average improvement in math was 13.5%.

A+ Grades Up's SES instruction has proven to be effective for special education students and Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. Over the course of the 2008/2009 school year, we have tutored 59 special education students and 141 LEPs. In ELA, the average improvement from pre- to post-test for special education students in our program was 20.81%, and the average improvement for LEPs was 7.87%. In mathematics, the average improvement for special education students was 8.02%, and the average improvement for

LEPs was 10.56%.

2. Joan Irwin, an educator and consultant—who has served as Director of Publications for the International Reading Association and on the Board of Directors of the Association of Educational Publishers—produced a study in 2006 that confirms the consistent success of Continental Press’ Finish Line Series in increasing student achievement.

In a Title I school in Ozone Park, New York, Irwin’s study found that the use of Finish Line Reading increased the percentage of students meeting or exceeding New York City reading standards from 48.4% to 66.1% between the years of 2002 and 2003. In a Title I school in Brooklyn, New York, Irwin’s study found that the use of Finish Line Math increased the percentage of students meeting or exceeding New York City math standards from 13.9% to 42.7% between 2002 and 2003.

(Joan Irwin, “Finish Line Test Preparation Programs: Research Base”, 2006)

3. A+ Grades Up collects parent surveys and letters of recommendation at the completion of our program as one means of monitoring our effectiveness. We have attached a sample of these letters at the end of this section.

F. Communication with parents and families

1. Parents/families are required to sign program documents before we begin service with students to make certain that they understand our policies and feel encouraged to participate in their child's academic achievement. Parents/families are also consulted during the development of students' ILP goals; they are heavily encouraged to respond to our tutors' requests for input. We also seek comments from parents/families over the course of the program in response to final ILPs, monthly progress reports and student improvement at program's end.

Written progress reports are delivered to parents/families via U.S. mail or hand delivery on a monthly basis. Progress report content includes ILP goals, achievement, attendance, and tutor comments regarding participation and student's progress within the A+ Grades Up program. All progress updates are provided in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon request. To the extent practicable, communication is presented in a language that parents/families can understand.

We consider parental involvement to be an important contributing factor to student academic improvement. We engage parents/families at every step of the process, from pre-testing and ILP creation to post-test score reporting. We offer parents/guardians the choice of small group instruction or one-on-one instruction for their child, making our program more accessible to students with working

parents/families or without reliable transportation. Parents/families also select their preferred days of the week for the student to receive tutoring with us.

In the initial ILP meeting, we discuss parents'/families' goals for their students and ask for their feedback in the development of students' ILPs. At this time, parents/families fill out and sign A+ Grades Up's Parent Objectives & Attendance Policy form. Once students' ILPs have been fully developed, we share them with parents/guardians for final approval. We also provide parents/guardians with helpful information, both in oral and written form, outlining general homework tips.

2. A+ Grades Up is committed to the satisfaction of parents/guardians and students. At our program's start, each parent/guardian is given our written complaint policy and procedure, which includes contact information for our Arkansas office. Parent/family complaints are initially handled by the appropriate site coordinator. If not resolved at this level, the complaint will be addressed by our regional manager. When necessary, we will communicate with district personnel to ensure that our program and tutors are in compliance and that students are receiving the best instruction possible. We will further comply with all district regulations regarding the handling of complaints and communication of the complaint to the district. We respond to all complaints within 24 hours of receipt.

A+ Grades Up accommodates the needs and schedules of working

parents/families by offering a range of flexible types of service delivery. We find that our service is most accessible when offered directly before and after school on-site at our students' regular schools to avoid the need for extra transportation. When we are unable to contract with schools or districts for the use of school facilities, we offer our SES program at local sites, such as community centers and churches that are easily accessible. We also offer our program on weekends for the convenience of parents/guardians who work during the week. Additionally, we offer in-home, one-on-one instruction.

G. Communication with Districts/Schools

1. Our Continental Press Finish Line instructional materials are research-based and directly aligned to the Arkansas content standards and ACTAAP (as well as many district achievement goals), which makes certain that students who utilize our SES tutoring program receive relevant content and proven, effective instructional strategies to supplement, reinforce and closely parallel their classroom learning.

All communication is in compliance with the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) in that all educational records are kept confidential and do not use educational records in our possession for any purpose other than those specified by the student or institution that disclosed the records. Any transmittal of a student's educational record to appropriate school or district personnel is monitored by our regional manager. All student records that we maintain are kept explicitly confidential.

A+ Grades Up ensures that our instruction and content is coordinated with the student's school program by using curriculum that is fully aligned to the Arkansas Content Standards. By operating with a curriculum directly linked to the Arkansas Content Standards, we ensure our efforts directly coordinate with those of the individual school districts. We work closely with school district personnel to ensure that a student's experiences during the regular school day

and the instruction we provide is clearly linked. In large part, this linkage is accomplished through careful creation of the Individual Learning Plan (ILP), including meaningful input from students' classroom teachers. Our program accommodates the needs of any given district, and we collaborate with these districts to ensure that the content of our SES program is complimentary to that which students receive during the school day. Continual assessment initiatives, such as ongoing testing results and formative and summative progress, are reported to district faculty, parents/guardians and administrators, thus providing verification that both the district instructional program and Arkansas standards are being successfully implemented. A+ Grades Up has a policy of hiring certified teachers, preferably those who work in the schools and districts where we provide SES. This cross-over helps us to maintain a connection between the instruction provided in our program and the daily classroom experience of students. We will continuously communicate with school staff to ensure our work is closely linked to what they are doing.

A+ Grades Up is committed to the satisfaction of schools. At our program's start, each school is given a copy of our written complaint policy and procedure, which includes contact information for our Arkansas office. Parent/guardian complaints are initially handled by the appropriate site coordinator. If not resolved at this level, the complaint will be addressed by our regional manager. When necessary, we will communicate with district personnel to ensure that our

program and tutors are in compliance and that students are receiving the best instruction possible. We will further comply with all district regulations regarding the handling of complaints and communication of the complaint to the district. We respond to all complaints within 24 hours of receipt.

In order to accommodate special education students, we assign them to instructors who are experienced in working with learning disabilities. We can also make accommodations for extra tutoring sessions, or more time working one-on-one with our instructors. We comply with students' IEPs and 504 plans. Although special education students are originally placed at their appropriate instructional level among mainstream students, special accommodations will be made as necessary. If daily classroom observation reveals that a special education student would benefit from either adding an aid, moving to a different class or being placed in a one-on-one setting, the proper adjustments are made after consultation with parents/guardians and the district.

Given that most of our tutoring takes place at schools, we form strong lines of communication with the schools to ensure we are abiding by their needs and schedules. For example, we leave the classrooms as we found them, offer services only during the times the school has space available, and follow the schools calendar.

2. We actively communicate on at least a weekly-basis student progress to

parents/families, teachers, and school and district staff in accordance with NCLB and FERPA confidentiality provisions. Tutors send out monthly written progress reports, consistently providing all parties with relevant information of the student's advancement. Since the majority of our tutoring typically takes place at students' schools, our tutors and managers are working near the teachers/designees and there is generally a convenient dialogue regarding student performance, participation, needs and achievement between the two parties.

Progress reports are e-mailed or sent via U.S. Mail to teachers/designees. Progress reports will outline ILP goals, achievement, attendance and tutor comments regarding participation and progress within our program. All questions or concerns by teachers/designees are answered and addressed by our tutor and/or site coordinator who are available daily. Teachers/designees are also contacted by telephone as needed to discuss students' progress or any other issues that may arise, such as poor attendance or behavioral issues.

At the end of the program, we issue a final progress report that addresses each student's percentage gains from pre-test to post-test. We will comply with any additional state and district requirements to protect student privacy at all times.

H. Qualifications of Instructional Staff

1. All A+ Grades Up tutors participate in six hours of paid training. This includes policies related to civil rights, diversity, and working with disadvantaged students, in addition to procedures related to health and safety issues. Our training program is aimed at increasing our SES program's effectiveness, increasing capacity to work with special populations and enhancing delivery of educational instruction. Tutors are trained in the use of forms and reports, the assessment process, reporting to parents/guardians and schools, using time sheets, and other operational components. We also provide training on motivating difficult students, designed to help tutors adapt to SES instruction. For ongoing support, all tutors have the contact information of our experienced full-time personnel, who possess advanced degrees in education and developmental psychology and years of experience working with Title I students. Additionally, our management staff constantly works to improve our management skills and program delivery. We follow current research regarding instructional methods and tutoring and apply any new knowledge to our program as appropriate.

A+ Grades Up provides each new member of our program staff with comprehensive training covering the following topics: our educational

philosophy; No Child Left Behind and SES background; Achieve Test instructions, guidelines and administration; our test security policy; instructional materials; effective instruction guidelines and instructional strategies; sequence of instructional sessions; tutor review policy; attendance policy; progress reporting procedures; instruction on the use of our SES Data Management System; incentives policy; procedures to report suspected child abuse; teaching LEP students; teaching students with disabilities; district and state required forms and how to complete them; and safety and emergency policies and procedures. Initial training includes 2.5 hours of program instruction. All program staff also participate in ongoing training of 1.5 hours per school year.

A+ Grades Up regional managers, lead tutors and site coordinators are available to support tutors on-site on a regular basis to ensure our program is implemented with fidelity. We distribute monthly training guidance electronically aimed at increasing program effectiveness and enhancing delivery of our SES program to ELL, special education and low-income students. We have follow-up meetings (in person or via conference call) with our tutors twice during each program to reiterate the electronic guidance, field questions and emphasize portions of our program.

Our mandatory professional development sessions keep our staff well-versed in our instructional strategies and materials. Past training sessions have included: Effective use of manipulatives; Reading Title I students; Research-based

teaching methods; Positive reinforcement techniques; Successful math strategies;
Benefits of small-group tutoring.

Site coordinators observe tutors on a regular basis. These observations are both scheduled and unscheduled. During the observations, the site coordinator directly observes instruction to make sure that the program guidelines are being followed. They also review student lesson plans and activities and ensure that safety and administrative procedures are being followed. These procedures include making sure that students are signing in each day and that phone calls to notify parents/guardians of absences are being made. Based on these observations, tutors will be retrained if necessary.

2. A+ Grades Up has provided SES to more than 15,000 students during the past 7 years. Our tutors, who typically have several years of teaching experience and hold state teaching certificates, have demonstrated experience and success teaching students of varying ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds working below grade level. We hire tutors with experience teaching in Title I schools and a background working with student populations similar to those in SES programs. Our tutors have experience working with special education students and students diagnosed with ADD and ADHD. We also have Spanish-speaking bilingual tutors that are trained to teach English language learners.

3. A+ Grades Up's SES instruction is provided by tutors and lead tutors who are qualified and experienced in working with low-income students,

students with disabilities and English Language Learners. More than 90% of our tutors are state certified teachers. When state certified teachers are unavailable to work in a specific area, we hire highly qualified tutors with a minimum of a bachelor's degree and relevant teaching experience with low-income students and students performing below grade level. Sometimes the most qualified tutor is a paraprofessional working at the schools we are servicing—in those instances, we will hire them as long as they have at least a Bachelor's degree and relevant teaching experience.

4. A+ Grades Up SES instruction is provided by our tutors and lead tutors who are qualified and experienced in working with low-income, special education students and LEP students. Our practice is to hire state certified teachers for these positions. When state certified teachers are not available to work in a specific area, we will hire highly qualified teachers and teachers with a minimum of a bachelor's degree and relevant teaching experience. Professional certifications held by tutors on our staff include: State Certification; Special Education; Transitional Bilingual; Reading Specialist; General Education; Early Childhood Education; Secondary Education.

I. Provider Goals and Objectives

1. We expect student in our program to demonstrate subject area improvement from pre-test to post-test of 10% - 15% and goal area sub skill improvement of 25% as measured by the Achieve pre- and post-test.

2. The long term goals of A+ Grades Up are to provide educational services and opportunities in support of student academic achievement to low-income and underperforming students who tend to be unable to access such services.

OBJECTIVE 1: Provide research-based curricula that is aligned to Arkansas Content Standards

- **Who:** A+ Grades Up's Director of Education
- **What:** Curricula from Continental Press, Great Source, Garlic Press, and Lakeshore Press.
- **How:** Qualified educator reviews available curricula for Reading/English Language Arts and Math to determine material that meets our criterion.
- **Criterion:** Research-based, Arkansas-aligned materials
- **Level of Success:** 89%

OBJECTIVE 2: Provide high-quality tutors

- **Who:** A+ Grades Up's Regional Managers and Site Coordinators
- **What:** Employ high-quality tutors
- **How:** Advertise locally, interview via telephone and then in person, review professional qualifications and certifications, perform criminal background checks, and hire individuals who meet our criterion.
- **Criterion:** Primarily State Certified Teachers. Minimum of Associates degree with tutoring experience.
- **Level of Success:** 100%

J. Cost of Service

A+ Grades Up's cost per student, per hour range up to \$50.00, depending on variables such as group size, teacher wages, and rental costs. The length of our tutoring sessions ranges from 60 – 90 minutes per session for 20 – 30 sessions, 1 – 3 days per week. The total cost of service delivery at \$50 per student per hour is \$1250 - \$1500 for 25 – 30 hours.

Our weekday sessions range up to \$75 per pupil per day of instruction for a 90 minute session and \$225 per pupil per instructional week for three 90 minute sessions over the course of a week. Saturday sessions, which may last up to 3 hours, range up to \$150 per pupil per day of instruction.

Our costs include: learning materials, learning manipulatives, tutoring location rental costs, tutor wages and administrative costs. Small group costs will be lower than the cost for one-on-one tutoring.