

# PLATO® Elementary Solutions Support Targeted, Individualized Learning at Valley of Enchantment



## Overview

- Valley of Enchantment Elementary School was looking for skills-based resources that could help improve test scores. Initial efforts focused on their Title I student population. The assistant superintendent for the district had seen PLATO® Elementary Solutions and recommended bringing it into the school.
- Using Title I funds, Terry Stanfill, principal at Valley of Enchantment, worked with the district to implement PLATO® Beginning Reading, PLATO® Math Expeditions, and PLATO® Reading Explorations into the computer lab in his K–3 school. The lab is open five days per week.
- Valley of Enchantment had computers in place in a lab and after one semester of testing the program, going through implementation and adjusting infrastructure to address any issues, the lab was running reliably for student use.

## Providing targeted learning

Using a built-in PLATO® Skills Inventory, students are assessed and placed into instructional modules that cover skills they have not mastered. Students are moved through the computer-based curriculum sequentially. By identifying the appropriate instructional level for each student, teachers can use PLATO Elementary Solutions to provide targeted, motivational learning opportunities that supplement and compliment core instruction. “Students at lower skill levels can work on skills taught in prior classes without embarrassment. Each student works on their own screen and moves at their own pace, providing a motivating and supportive environment,” said Stanfill.

Access to lessons at multiple skill levels has also made lesson planning more efficient for teachers. “I have seen great examples of how this positively impacts teacher planning,” Stanfill said. Our Third grade teachers don’t have to go back to a first grade teacher to find supplemental materials for struggling students. They have it all available to them on the computer.”

The same is true for advanced students at Valley of Enchantment. Although it is a K–3 school, they have also purchased licenses to PLATO® curriculum for grades 4–6. “We have advanced students who go on and teach themselves lessons the teacher hasn’t gotten to yet. It is very individualized and allows for students to excel beyond their grade level without a great deal of teacher research for appropriate resources.”

**INSTITUTION:** Valley of Enchantment Elementary  
Crestline, CA

**GRADES:** K–3

**TYPE:** Public

**ENROLLMENT:** 467 students;

**DEMOGRAPHICS:** 48% of students participate in free or reduced lunch, 19% Hispanic

**CONTACT:** Terry Stanfill,  
Principal

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PRINCIPAL, VALLEY OF  
ENCHANTMENT ELEMENTARY

## Moving into the classroom

After the first year, Stanfill expanded the use of PLATO® Instructional Content by installing student workstations into every first grade classroom. Teachers have found e-learning to be a great way to facilitate one-on-one instruction. “We currently have 20 : 1 ratios in our classroom. With PLATO content loaded on our workstations, teachers are free to work one-on-one with students who are struggling because they know the other students are engaged on appropriate instruction at their skill level using the PLATO content,” said Stanfill.

## Professional development

Teachers were initially trained by a PLATO® Educational Consultant in train-the-trainer workshops. During the school year, teachers collaborate, expanding their knowledge and use of the computer-based curricula. “Anytime a teacher finds something new, they share it with the others. Using this model, we continue to find the curriculum more useful all the time,” said Stanfill.

Teachers vary in their level of use of the computer-based curriculum. Some teachers customize the program for their classes and create individual learning plans, while others rely on the PLATO Skills Inventory to prescribe appropriate learning. No matter how teachers use it, Stanfill has found they all are champions of technology-based learning. “The lab is open all day, five days a week, and our teachers use every minute of the lab time because they completely believe in the benefits their students receive,” said Stanfill.

## Results

“We didn’t have high expectations going in because we hadn’t seen the product in use and we didn’t choose it ourselves,” said Stanfill. “However, we have found it has paid dividends beyond our wildest dreams.” In fact, Stanfill was not expecting growth during the first year because a majority of the initial phase focused on implementing the products, training the teachers, and exploring new ways to use the program. However, from January to April the school’s Academic Performance Index (API) went up 56 points, helping the schools achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP). The school has set the goal of having every student achieve an 800 API. After one year of using PLATO courseware, the school has progressed to a score of 755.

Stanfill attributes this growth to the staff’s new ability to use diagnostics to identify skill deficiencies and then prescribe appropriate instruction to fill the identified gaps. “PLATO Learning has given us the tools to fill student skill gaps in a teacher-friendly, time-efficient environment,” said Stanfill.

The school has also observed results in student engagement. Even though the students use PLATO courseware every day, the teachers have not seen students become bored with the lessons. “There is so much variety in activities, graphics, stories, and adventures for each level that the students are always fully engaged,” said Stanfill.

## Expanding eLearning

Because of the initial success, Stanfill has decided to implement additional products. “We knew PLATO Learning provided good products that produce results. We saw PLATO® Achieve Now at the PLATO® National Education Summit last year and were excited at the thought of what this product could provide our students,” said Stanfill. He asked for an onsite demo and also brought in samples of PLATO Achieve Now for students to try. After this research, the staff decided to implement the product for the on-campus Boys and Girls Club program and after-school tutoring. “PLATO Achieve Now provides additional practice in key math and language arts skills for our students without a lot of teacher preparation time—a key benefit for products used in after-school programs,” said Stanfill. Even in its initial offering, Stanfill finds the after-school program with PLATO Achieve Now to be “going beautifully.”

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