

Local school getting new learning tool

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Andrew Jackson getting algebra application as tool to improve test scores

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JACKSONVILLE, Fla. - Every student in Florida has to pass an Algebra One end-of-course exam to graduate high school, but some struggle with the test.

Statewide last year, only 59 percent of students passed the test the first time they took it. And the later in high school they took the class, the more they struggled with it.

To turn that around, the University of Florida and a Gainesville-based group called Study Edge, came together to build a free online prep resource called [Algebra Nation](#).

At Andrew Jackson High School on Main Street, the Florida Education Commissioner and Florida State Board of Education Chairman will be at the school Monday talking about Algebra Nation with students who are already using the algebra nation application.

Two algebra teachers from Andrew Jackson were actually hand-picked to help launch the groundbreaking tool.

Sabrina Hall teaches Algebra 1 at Andrew Jackson. In just 60 days her students take the all-important, state-required exam.

"The kid can make all As in the algebra class, and that's great for your GPA," Hall said. "Unfortunately, Algebra 1 is a graduation requirement, and if the students do not pass the end-of-course, they do not get the credit."

But now, the innovative new Algebra Nation app could help solve this problem.



Since January, Hall has had access to the brand new tool.

"I cannot say enough great things about how awesome this is and it's free!" said Hall, pictured, right, with some of her students.

Algebra Nation gives students 24/7 online access to help. Interactive videos walk them through solving the problem and a "wall" like on Facebook, allows students to post questions for teachers and classmates can answer.

"Students can go online and help other kids. They get these things called karma points and so our kids are really competitive and they're trying to help as many kids as possible," Hall said. It's awesome because now not only did I learn it in class, but I'm teaching it to someone else and that is going to help them hold onto that knowledge."

It's knowledge that will be tested in 60 days and Hall only hopes it supplements her students' scores.

"My goal is to hope students will take advantage of this and we see more homework being completed, more kids asking questions when they come or at least now, being willing to raise their hand and answer some questions," Hall said.

The free app launched in January and is already being used by 4,000 students in about 600 schools.

The tool officially launched Monday morning at Andrew Jackson at an event attended by Florida Board of Education Commissioner Tony Bennett, Duval County School Superintendent Nikolia Vitti and Jacksonville Mayor Alvin Brown.

Officials hope that the event will help get the word out and encourage more teachers to use Algebra Nation for test prep in their classrooms.