

## AFFORDABLE, ALIGNED, EFFECTIVE: HOW EXEMPLARS SUPPORTS MATH SUCCESS

### Case Study

#### SCHOOL PROFILE

Enrollment: 600  
Math Proficiency: 51%  
Free or Reduced Lunch: 45%  
Population Density: Rural



**“It’s definitely a cost-effective tool ... We do need to be very critical of the resources that we have, and Exemplars was one that, for us, is cost-effective, it’s very easy to use for our staff.”**

**Ethan Sentz**

Assistant Principal



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Assistant Principal  
Bermudian Springs Elementary  
Pennsylvania

#### SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Bermudian Springs Elementary is a public K–5 school located in Pennsylvania, serving approximately 600 students. The school is committed to providing high-quality education and addressing learning gaps to ensure student success.

#### CHALLENGE

Bermudian Springs Elementary School needed a math resource aligned with standards to close learning gaps and prepare students for state assessments, specifically the Pennsylvania System School Assessment (PSSA). The school's previous resources were not meeting these needs, prompting a search for a more effective solution.

#### RESULTS

Following the adoption of Exemplars, math proficiency scores at Bermudian Springs Elementary increased significantly. The school has also noticed improvements in student confidence, problem-solving skills, and a greater willingness to tackle challenging tasks. Teachers and students have observed positive shifts in attitude and goal setting guided by the Exemplars rubric.

## THE CHALLENGE

Bermudian Springs Elementary faced significant challenges after COVID. The school's previous resources lacked alignment with state standards, resulting in student learning gaps and inadequate preparation for the PSSA. A reliable, efficient solution was needed to better address these issues and support both students and teachers.

## CHOOSING EXEMPLARS

In 2021, Bermudian Springs Elementary discovered Exemplars, *Problem Solving for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, a supplemental math resource providing rigorous, standards-aligned performance tasks designed to support quality instruction and student learning. After evaluating various options, the school chose Exemplars for its proven track record, cost-effectiveness, and ease of use. Teachers at the school appreciated the quality and reliability of the tasks.

“ ———  
“It's nice to have a trusted resource that links to state standards ...”  
— **Ethan Sentz** ——— ”

## THE RESULTS

Teachers at Bermudian Springs were quick to integrate Exemplars problem-solving tasks into their curriculum, finding them easy to use and highly effective in engaging students.

Since implementation, the school has observed significant improvements in student learning outcomes. Most notably, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding math proficiency rose from 40% in 2020–2021 to 54.6% in 2023–2024. Students have become more confident in their problem-solving abilities and more willing to tackle challenging tasks. Teachers have observed positive shifts in student attitudes and goal-setting behaviors, influenced by the Exemplars rubric. Where students once left constructed response items blank, they are now putting ideas on paper, thinking flexibly, and making mathematical connections.

The overall positive impact on student learning and preparedness underscores the value of Exemplars as a trusted resource in K–5 math education.