



## STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 83720  
BOISE, IDAHO 83720-0027

TOM LUNA  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Idaho State Department of Education  
April 7, 2009  
[www.sde.idaho.gov](http://www.sde.idaho.gov)

Media contact:  
Melissa McGrath  
(208) 332-6818  
[mrmcgrath@sde.idaho.gov](mailto:mrmcgrath@sde.idaho.gov)

# BOISE STUDENTS WIN MARCH MADNESS MATH COMPETITION

BOISE – The University of North Carolina men's basketball team isn't the only group of students celebrating a March Madness victory today. Sue Peck's fifth-grade class at Liberty Elementary in Boise won a March Madness competition of their own this week.

The students solved more than 3,324 math problems in March to win a nationwide contest hosted by Apangea Learning. Since the beginning of March, students in 350 school districts across the nation worked to solve the most math problems through the web-based Apangea Learning program. Liberty Elementary beat students at Cardiff Junior High School in Katy, Texas during the championship round this weekend to win.

"I am so proud of the students at Liberty Elementary for their hard work and dedication to mathematics," Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Luna said. "It is exciting to see students having so much fun while working so hard on solving math problems. That is what the Idaho Math Initiative is all about."

The Idaho Math Initiative is a comprehensive effort to improve student achievement in math across Idaho. The Initiative, which began this school year, focuses on professional development for teachers as well as providing additional tools, such as Apangea Learning, to students who struggle in math or need advanced opportunities. Apangea Learning is an online, supplemental math instruction and tutoring program that meets students' needs by providing focused instruction, rigorous math problems, access to live certified teachers and a motivation program with rewards for working on math problems.

The March Madness competition is part of the motivation program. Students were awarded points for the number of math problems they solved. In the championship game, Liberty students scored 57,000 points, compared to Cardiff Junior High's 25,000 points. Students at Post Falls High School in Post Falls, Idaho also made it to the Final Four of the competition.

"It was a combination of three things that contributed to my students' success in this competition," said Sue Peck, the fifth-grade teacher at Liberty Elementary. "First, Apangea Learning is a great program because it is individualized for each student so they can go at their own pace. Second, I have really great students this year who are hard-working. This competition started with a handful of students and then the enthusiasm spread to the whole class. Third, I have great parents and a lot of parental support. Parents are the ones who provided a time and a place for students to do work after school."

- MORE -



## STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 83720  
BOISE, IDAHO 83720-0027

TOM LUNA  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

The students in Peck's class spent a total of 256 hours solving math problems over the past month, and nearly half of these hours were completed after school.

"It was fantastic to visit Liberty Elementary and see how excited those students were about working on Apangea Learning. They voluntarily spent over 100 hours of their own time on weekends, evenings and over spring break, solving thousands of math problems. Being a former math teacher myself, I can tell you that is absolutely amazing!" said Glen Zollman, Idaho state director for Apangea Learning.

For winning the competition, the students will receive a trophy, specially designed Apangea Learning March Madness T-shirts and a pizza party. In addition, officials from the Idaho State Department of Education and Apangea Learning will attend a school assembly in May to personally congratulate the students and teacher on their success.

Since Apangea Learning was introduced to Idaho schools in September, students across the state have spent more than 78,000 hours solving math problems during and after school.

To learn more about the Idaho Math Initiative, please visit <http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/math/> and click on the "Idaho Math Initiative" link.

#####