

For Immediate Release

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Online Arithmetic Curriculum Boosts Student Skills

“*Count Me Smart*” Combines New Math and Back to Basics

(Cleveland, Ohio, March 8, 2001) “Dropping computers into the classroom and running wires to the Internet is the easy part,” says Don Scipione, president of Acme Express, Inc. “The hard part is providing an innovative curriculum that teachers can understand, see the need for, and be trained to use.” Mr. Scipione is speaking of an innovative program that is helping area teachers and students achieve impressive results in learning math basics.

Acme Express, a MidTown Cleveland developer of Internet software, has received a \$300,000 Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) grant from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services to develop ***Count Me Smart***, an on-line arithmetic curriculum, for special education students at Case Elementary School in the Cleveland Municipal School District.

Count Me Smart combines both new math and back-to-basics methods to teach addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. Each ***Count Me Smart*** lesson consists of a new math conceptual lesson plan taught to the whole class, back-to-basics fluency building worksheets done individually by students as deskwork or homework, and on-line computer games.

“The game component of ***Count Me Smart*** and its delivery over the Internet are key innovations, because they extend and reinforce concepts and skills and motivate many students who would otherwise be left behind,” says Mr. Scipione. A prototype, tested last year with second grade students from Charles Orr Elementary School, helped students achieve two-digit addition scores that matched the speed and accuracy of those attained in suburban schools.

Count Me Smart is based upon a curriculum developed by special education teacher Richard Oldrieve, a 16-year Cleveland Municipal School District veteran. Now collaborating with Acme Express, Inc., he says “***Count Me Smart*** offers a core arithmetic curriculum that can be targeted to meet the needs of individual students, teachers, and school districts. The on-line component allows students and teachers to access the curriculum from the classroom, home, or library.”

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The project comes at a time when all schools are under increasing pressure to improve math and science scores, according to Oba Lloyd, principal of Case Elementary. “So we’re trying to give students another way of being taught mathematics skills. It’s just plain common sense that we put students into this age of technology,” he explains, referring to ***Count Me Smart’s*** on-line capability. “The more they’re involved in the new technology, the better off they’ll be in the coming years.”

An additional \$12,000 was provided for the project through Councilman Joe Cimperman’s Ward 13 Neighborhood Equity Fund to allow all (not just special education) Case second graders to participate in ***Count Me Smart***.

Cleveland Schools CEO Barbara Byrd-Bennett is enthusiastic about the concept and says, “...our public schools are constantly looking for best practices that encourage students to succeed academically under a rigorous instructional program supported by high quality standards in mathematics. A continued collaboration between the Cleveland Municipal School District and Acme Express, Inc., with the support of the U. S. Department of Education’s SBIR grant program, will bring the District closer to fulfilling that need.”

Mayor Michael R. White, a supporter of the project, agrees. “I want to applaud Acme Express, Inc. for their continuing efforts to help improve the quality of education in our District. Under the leadership of Don Scipione, Acme Express’s innovative ***Count Me Smart*** program can serve as a model for better educating our youth.”

Since 1998 Acme Express, Inc. has won more than \$400,000 in SBIR grants to integrate technology into the K-5 curriculum. Acme was established in 1980 and specializes in web-enabled software. The firm is located at 3821 Prospect Avenue. For more information contact Don Scipione at: (216)-391-7400 x202, dscipione@acmex.com, or visit our website at www.acmex.com.

Download a digital image of the 140 Case Elementary School 2nd graders, their teachers, and Acme staff at: <http://www.acmex.com/products/countmesmart.asp>.