

PRODUCT REVIEWS

Compiled by Kathie Felix

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News of the latest technology products for K-12 may be sent directly to Kathie Felix at 5746 Union Mill Road, PMB 605, Clifton, VA 20124 or to kathiefelix@aol.com.

Electronic Resources for Schools REPORT CARD

- ★★★★★ = Highly Recommended
- ★★★★ = Recommended
- ★★★ = Good
- ★★ = OK in some cases
- ★ = Don't consider

This section provides concise, original reviews of new or important hardware, software, websites, and electronic media that relate to the K-12 curriculum. All reviews are written by practicing educators who, in most cases, have used the software in a school environment. Where grouped into broad, age-appropriate categories, these categories should not be viewed as prescriptive. To facilitate "comparison shopping," these reviews are highly structured. Reviewers prepare a "report card" based on a five-star scale.

GENERAL INTEREST SOFTWARE/WEBSITES

Achiever!

Company: Brainchild Corp., 3050 Horseshoe Drive N., Suite 290, Naples, FL 34104. Phone: (800) 811-2724; internet: www.brainchild.com.

Price: \$147 per class per subject. Quantity discounts are available.

Audience: Ages 6–adult.

Format: Internet-based: text, animation, and graphics.

Minimum System Requirements: A computer with internet access and a web browser.

Description: The Achiever! program assesses student knowledge as it relates to state standards and adjusts student instruction based on scores from online testing.

★★★★★ | REPORT CARD

Installation	A
Content/Features	A
Ease of Use	A
Product Support	A

Reviewer Comments:

Installation/Access: A simple login with a username and password is required for access. **Installation/Access Rating: A**

Content/Features: The Achiever! assessment program creates individualized lesson plans designed to provide differentiated instruction tied to learning standards for each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

This is more than a quiz program. Students are tested and instructed on each

of the standards throughout an automated personal learning plan designed to help them learn and master the required material. Self-pacing is obviously a strong feature of this program. The instruction is engaging and appeals to various learning styles and abilities.

The program helps teachers identify student strengths and weaknesses early in the school year, allowing ample time to prepare for high-stakes spring testing. The content, which is based on state standards, is presented through formative and summative assessments. The lessons are numbered to reflect state standards identifications.

An array of multimedia instruction teaches learning concepts. The multimedia content includes animation and colorful graphics that provide an attractive format designed to engage student learners.

ESL (English as a Second Language) students will benefit from the focus on graphics in the lessons.

At the start, students are “pre-tested” on each content standard. At this stage, they can review mistakes by looking back at the answers they missed. The correct solutions are shown immediately when a mistake is made.

The Study Mode offers randomized multiple-choice questions with immediate and detailed feedback. If a student inputs a wrong answer, the Explain button can offer instant guidance. Students must solve each question before they move on to the next. The Review Mode resembles an electronic flashcard presenting a question and an explanation.

A standards-based Post Test can be taken when the student is ready.

Achiever! is designed for individual use. Students can access the online program from any location within a school and complete any number of lessons. Users can work online in the classroom, at school, at home, in after school programs, and in home-schooling situations. The personal learning plans can be made available to parents, teachers, and tutors.

The management system stores scores of data and creates reports with individual, school, building, and district performance data.

A home version is available.

Content/Features Rating: A

Ease of Use: Access requires a username and password. Students can work on the program with any computer with

Achiever!
Linking standards to instruction

Graphs and Charts

Play Lesson
Learn The Concept
English Español

Study
Practice The Concept

Test
Show your progress!

Circle Graph

Bar Graph

Pictograph

Players	Scores
Jones	● ● ●
Diaz	●
Brown	● ● ● ●

Achiever!

internet access at school or at home.

Ease of Use Rating: A

Product Support: Product support is available via a toll-free telephone number and by email from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern time.

Product Support Rating: A

Recommendation: Achiever! offers an excellent way to measure and assess student progress throughout the school year. Differentiation is automatic. Instruction can be adjusted in areas where students are struggling. Students know exactly where they are in their learning and can set personal goals for growth and progress.

Overall, Achiever! simplifies the work of assessing students on a regular basis. The management system provides immediate access to helpful data. The

collected data can be sorted easily and used by school administrators to see where each child is performing. Teachers can use the data to prepare class and individual lessons. Parents will appreciate the information when it is presented at conferences scheduled throughout the year.

Schools looking for an online answer to state standards assessment will find this to be a great program. Achiever! can help make AYP (annual yearly progress) much easier to attain through its structured and systematic format. This is definitely a program that every school would find helpful as it works to reach its yearly goals for students. **Highly recommended.**

Reviewer: **Sally Finley**, Educational Consultant, Coral Springs, FL; sallyfinley1@yahoo.com.