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All eyes are on Ramesh when he teaches. He watches over every detail of his students' learning experience and even plays classical music to soothe their minds while they take tests or read.

Tanner said that he declined an opportunity to teach at prestigious Myers Park High School to accept a teaching role at Midwood.

Second chance to succeed

Since 2001, the school has offered its 350 students a second chance to succeed, employing an innovative mix of programming including TAPS (teenage parent services), Saturday school, a summer program, a virtual high school and a concurrent program for students who need to make up a class while they attend their home school. The individualized curriculum places more responsibility on students, an approach that meshes well with Ramesh's teaching philosophy.

"I think first and foremost we need to understand the needs of students and where their difficulties are rather than enforce a curriculum that is set," he said. "My first step (requires) understanding why they have selected this subject and what it is that they don't know about it. You're talking to an audience that you need to make receptive. Teaching is not pouring information into one's gullet."

Students agree. "He makes sure that every kid in the class gets it," said Krystin Simpson, 16. "He asks each student as he teaches if you're OK, and that means a lot." Fifteen-year-old Nicole DeAymor, formerly a Garinger High student, said the key to her Midwood success has been about grasping the relevance of math in her everyday life. "Last

year I didn't pass my math class and my teacher used to call me dumb and stupid," she said. "From the first day I came here he (Ramesh) made it fun for me and now I love math. ... Dr. Ramesh has inspired me to become a math teacher. Maybe I could bring to them (my students) what he's brought to me."

'Every child has the potential'

Ramesh, whose own son began reading at 18 months, believes all children can do well. "Every child has the potential," he said. "The teacher must have the gift to pull that out of them. Rather than have the negatives of what one cannot do, you must stress the positives, that they can exhibit their talent, whether it's music, art or literature."

At a time when a man of his wisdom and expertise could slip into a soothing sort of life, Ramesh keeps pushing. He was inspired to teach high school students after working with some of the nation's brightest science students who were interns at the Department of Energy. He said seeing the impact he can

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