Dr. Morris Bramlett, Dean of Math and Sciences and Professor of Chemistry, was selected to be one of the instructors for three reviews to be held for the Pulaski County Special School District (PCSSD) Advanced Placement (AP) chemistry students. At the first of the Saturday review sessions, Bramlett provided reviews in the subjects of stoichiometry and the gas laws to approximately 70 chemistry students from the Pulaski County schools. The review was held at the Mills University Studies High School in Little Rock. This was the first of three planned test preparation sessions, with the second two sessions being in March and May of 2014. The purpose of the review is to provide additional coverage of the topics that the AP students will see on their end of year exam. The students can receive college credit at most universities for one or more courses with a qualifying score on the exam.

Over the past several years, Bramlett has provided AP instruction and guidance for several schools in the UAM region, and also provided test prep reviews on the UAM campus for the schools in the area as well as, El Dorado, and Arkadelphia regions as part of the Arkansas Advanced Initiative in Math and Sciences (AAIMS) program. The AAIMS program was a grant funded program housed at UALR that began in 2007 when Arkansas was one of seven states to receive the grant from the National Math and Science Initiative. The grant expired in 2013; however, several schools are interested in keeping the program going in some fashion. Bramlett commented, “I am pleased to see that many in the state are willing to put forth the effort and the funds needed to keep a program such as this going. These kids are the best and the brightest in Arkansas and this program helps them become better prepared for college.”

When asked how he became involved in this program, Bramlett replied, “I first got involved when Lonni Davis was asked to teach AP Chemistry at Hamburg High School. She hadn’t taught AP chemistry before, and she felt that she needed help to get up to speed. While talking with her on the phone, the idea hit me that I could teach her class on topics she needed help with, and she could simply sit back and watch. After the first day, I was hooked. I enjoyed working with the kids at Hamburg and essentially begged Lonni into letting me come back again.” Bramlett added, “When I shared my success story with Tracie Jones, the Director of the UAM Education Renewal Zone (ERZ), she immediately took the idea and turned it into an organized outreach program. By the end of the year, she had turned our program into a popular thing. I guest lectured AP Chemistry classes multiple days each at Crossett, Rison, Star City, and Monticello, in addition to the 17 days I spent at Hamburg.” From that, the ERZ program and the School of Math and Sciences began hosting the AP Science test prep Saturdays on the UAM campus, which later grew to include the Math review Saturday sessions.

With the grant ending last spring, no one is quite sure how the program will continue. Some schools are trying to continue the program without outside funding, while others are trying to find other sources to cover the cost. Ms. Jones has been in contact with course coordinators at some of the public schools in this area, and at this time the plan is to continue supporting math and science instruction through partnering with classroom teachers in the area school districts and Saturday test prep sessions when requested.