

**Math Adoption Oversight Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**December 7, 2016**  
**3:30 p.m. Governing Board Room**

**Members present:** Lara Berdahl, Emily Blaney, Kim Slattery, Rob Hajek, Holly Russell, Tonya Mizrahi, Sheri Burns, Rachel Harter, Kaitzer Puglia, Carmen Arom, Linda Posod, Debra Craddock, Ajay Perumbeti and Anais Wenn.

The meeting started at 3:30 p.m.

**Feedback on Teacher Training**

Mrs. Wenn announced that two of three teacher trainings for Everyday Math have been completed and the final session will take place on January 18 and 19, 2017. She asked teachers if they had identified any areas of need to be covered in the final session.

- Some teachers asked if pacing of lessons could be one of the trainer's focus areas.
- The e-tool kit on ConnectEd has been helpful, but there is still a need to sort through a lot of materials. More training on ConnectEd would be helpful. There has been success with entering student data, but teachers need more support on how to access that data and how to best utilize it. Additionally, more training is needed on how to print the online alternate assessments accessed from ConnectEd. These assessments, which are meant to be given online, don't print well.
- Kindergarten teachers find it difficult to fit the program into a half day Kindergarten. They continue to supplement with other resources to meet the needs of their students.
- Teachers need suggestions on ways to organize the manipulatives.
- It would be nice to have a user-friendly format for the game rules in the student reference book. Teachers asked whether there is something that can be distributed to students.

**Assessments**

Mrs. Wenn asked teachers to share their thoughts on the assessments. She reminded the committee that the goal was to utilize, the publisher's assessments as common assessments in order to eliminate the need for constant revision of the existing assessments to match the content and pacing. She asked if the teachers thought this could happen next year.

- The main assessment is adequate and the challenge questions and performance tasks are good for students with advanced math skills, but difficult for struggling students. Some teachers have been separating the performance task and challenge questions into different assessments so that the overall grades would not be impacted. Mrs. Wenn shared that in the 6th grade Math in Focus (MIF) program, the challenge questions are not intended to be fully solved by every student. The publisher mentioned that the top 10% of the students may solve them and the rest of the students may receive partial credit for attempting a problem to draw a model and show steps taken to solve the problem. This is similar to SBAC (end of the year standardized assessment) where students get partial credit for attempting and for justifying their reasoning. She requested

that teachers ask every student to try the challenge problems and performance tasks so that they are exposed to the problems and to give them partial credit for their attempts to solve them. Are there challenge problems that can be used as practice? Rob suggested using the challenge questions from the Math Masters book.

- Teachers appreciate the fact that the tests are open ended and rigorous.
- How will these assessments work as common assessments next year? How will they work with Illuminate? Currently, EDM assessments are not in Illuminate. Will the tests be created and each question linked to a standard? Or will they be created as summaries of assessments and final scores entered? How will this look for parents since Illuminate generates parent letters? Next year, can the common assessments be graded and sent home since parents will not get a breakdown in a parent letter? These questions will be brought up at principals' meetings as well as at the Instructional Planning Group (IPG) meetings where teacher leaders and administrators will decide the next steps for common assessments.
- Are all teachers at all grade levels giving a practice test/study guide (which have been created from the online materials)? Mrs. Wenn said that not all teachers give them. One teacher shared that practice tests have helped him and his colleagues improve student performance on the actual tests. Teachers will discuss this with their colleagues and bring feedback to the next meeting. Practice tests shouldn't look too similar to the actual test because it could be interpreted as teaching to the test which is not a good practice. Practice tests would be helpful for parents. One of the teachers mentioned that practice tests would not be appropriate for Kindergarteners and 1st graders.
- Some teachers found it challenging to assign grades/marks in the report cards this trimester due to the fact that not all standards were covered to mastery level with the spiraling approach. For example, teachers taught a concept, but didn't think students were exposed to it enough to reach mastery, therefore issuing a grade for that standard was difficult. Ms. Wenn will make sure that the report cards are discussed at the Parent EDM Education Night. There was a question about giving N/As vs. revising the current report card to better reflect the standards covered each trimester. Ms. Wenn discussed both options and mentioned that the District is open to revising the report card (math section only) if teachers will be willing to join a committee to do this work. Teacher representatives will discuss it with colleagues and communicate with Mrs. Wenn so that a decision can be made on next steps.

### **Resources and Materials**

Mrs. Wenn asked the teachers to share feedback on materials and resources that have been provided to them. She wanted to know if teachers had any needs in this area that had not been met.

- One of the teachers mentioned that she only had one kilogram weight in her kit and would prefer to have one for each student. Storing those manipulatives was brought up as a concern and sharing rather than each student having their own was suggested. Another suggestion was to have a class set stored in the science lab for teachers to check out and return back.

- One of the teachers felt there were too many resources and materials. Mrs. Wenn suggested starting with what is most useful to their practice and not feeling like they need to use everything within the program. She reminded the committee that the “magic” is in the teachers’ instruction and the way they bring the content to the students, not how many materials they use.
- One of the upper grade teachers expressed concerns with students who were absent often and missed the direct instruction provided by the teachers. Catching them up is challenging. A first grade teacher stated that they find that students catch up easily because of the spiraling and the resources that are available on line.

### **Teacher Feedback from Various Grade Levels/School Sites**

Mrs. Wenn asked the teachers to share any other general feedback about Everyday Math.

- Pacing is still challenging for teachers.
- Online assessments could be more teacher friendly.
- 1st grade teachers really like Everyday Math. They don’t have to worry so much about kids being pulled for services or absent because of the spiraling in the program.
- Students are getting more comfortable explaining their thinking in writing.
- Students enjoy the program.
- Some teachers are still figuring out the textbook.
- Younger students have a hard time writing explanations.
- A second grade teacher reported being overwhelmed with the number of concepts covered in one unit. The Explore lessons (purple pages in primary Teacher Editions) can be taught after the test.
- One of the teachers reported that her students were better prepared at this point in the year in number sense because of the frequency of the exposure to the concept, and teachers feel confident for the future of the program when there is not as much need to fill gaps.
- It is difficult for the students who go to after school math programs or tutors because they may be “undoing” what the teacher is trying to do in class (memorization vs. sense making). Parents are asked to talk to the teacher for extra help instead of hiring tutors or enrolling in after school programs which do not help the students.
- Teachers are happy with the Skills books.
- There is a need to create practice tests or study guides for upper grades.
- A fourth grade teacher shared that the spiral review has really helped students with double digit multiplication because the students have a strong foundation in base ten and place value.

### **Parent Feedback**

Mrs. Wenn thanked the parents on the committee for collecting parent feedback informally or formally and bringing it to this meeting.

A parent from PCR shared:

- Parents of younger students felt better about the program than parents of older students.
- Games and activities are fun and engaging. The students are coming home talking about counting, games, etc.

- Some parents are concerned that their students aren't getting challenged enough. A suggestion was made to contact the teacher and let them know that the student needs to be challenged. There are several resources and built in differentiation opportunities in the program to challenge any student at any grade level.
- The Home Links are difficult because of the directions.
- Some games seem too easy. Students have to waste time on easy games until it gets challenging. Is it possible to start with difficult games instead of wasting time on the easy ones first? Communicating student needs to the teacher was brought up again. Teachers will make suggestions to support the student.
- There are too many ways to solve problems, and that is confusing.
- One parent asked if they could have a textbook. The reference book serves as the textbook for this program and parents have several resources online to help them at home.
- The PTA WebMaster would like to put resources on the PTA website. They may post any resources available with approval from the principals.
- Different parents are going to different websites to try to help their students. Posting available resources and communicating it to parents will address this concern.
- Parents should know about the Virtual Learning Community EDM website and any other resources - like a link to a video. Mrs. Wenn asked the principals to send this information to parents so they can have access to it. They can also post this on their websites.

A parent from LCE was unable to attend and sent her feedback to Mrs. Wenn who shared it with the committee.

- Children seem less frustrated with math this year. It seems to make more sense to the kids than the last couple years.
- Children seem to really like the computer games.
- The memorization of facts is not as strong. While the kids seem to understand the process behind the answer, they are not able to quickly answer the simple addition/subtraction/multiplication facts which they will need to do later with higher math. Teachers and administrators on the committee explained that if the students really understand the concepts they can do higher level math later. Although math fluency is still expected, focusing on memorization is not the goal. Critical thinking and deeper understanding of concepts is the instructional focus.
- Everyday Math seems to keep jumping around. There was a concern about not spending the time to really get into the concept. However, the program has review questions at the bottom of each homework page, which is good.
- Math program seems to move fast and if parents are not able to help the child right away with new concept they don't have a chance before the program moves on to something else. They understand it is a spiraling program but when end of the chapter test is given the kids are not scoring as well because they can't grasp the newer concepts. It is obvious that some parents do not understand the concept of spiraling and parent education on the philosophy and approach of this program is needed to address their concerns. Mrs. Wenn will ask the presenter to cover this information at the parent night on **January 11, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. at PCY.**

A parent from PCY shared:

Her students are in 6th grade so her feedback came from 6th grade parents on Math in Focus. Mrs. Wenn clarified that this committee was established under the direction of the Governing Board to monitor the implementation of Everyday Math program, in response to concerns from a parent group that was unhappy with the adoption of this program. Math in Focus was not intended to be part of this committee's work, however, any feedback from parents is welcomed and will be considered to improve programs at our schools.

- The book doesn't have enough examples.
- Challenge problems are hard! Students can get partial credit for attempting and justifying their reasoning.
- The book should approach the algebraic method along with the Singapore method.
- The homework assigned is more complicated than what is being taught in the classroom. The book doesn't support this.
- The teaching staff doesn't seem comfortable with the program.
- Parents fear that students are at a disadvantage because they are using this program in 6th grade only.
- Parents are unable to help with homework. Resources are available and were shared at the parent night. Principals will send out these resources again to parents and post on their websites.
- One parent asked if the district could step back and reassess the intensity of Math in Focus.
- Parents would have benefitted from both the parent math night and the access to the website.
- One student is bored. Mrs. Wenn suggested talking to the child's teacher for differentiation through the Enrich resource from the publisher and Redbird math through Stanford.

The meeting ended at 4:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Emily Blaney