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Math in Focus

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Principal's Bulletin

October 2018

Math in Focus

Dear Heather Families,

As part of our [strategic plan](#), all our schools are aligning instructional goals and materials with the Common Core Standards. Two years ago our district selected a new K-5 mathematics curriculum, Math in Focus. As part of this implementation of this relatively new curriculum teachers will continue to participate in coaching professional development and collaborate about instructional practices. Parent education nights were offered to parents to better understand our math program and to be able to better support their children for home practice.

Why Math in Focus?

Math in Focus was selected for its mastery-based approach to supporting learning. During the selection process, we used [criteria](#) reflecting the key shifts of the Common Core Standards:

- **Focus:** Students engage in deep work across grade level learning goals to build a strong foundation. In K-2, instruction focuses on concepts, skills, and problem solving using addition and subtraction. In Grades 3-5, students develop concepts, skills, and problem solving using multiplication, division and fractions.
- **Rigor:** Challenging, engaging work helps students become powerful mathematical thinkers who can use numbers flexibly and accurately as they apply mathematical ideas to show understanding. Students learn to prove paths of thinking, justifying their solutions verbally and in writing.
- **Coherence:** Topics and ideas are linked across grades, building understanding to support mastery. At each step, lessons progress from concrete-pictorial-abstract. Hands-on experiences and modeling are emphasized to build rich understanding.

It's Beyond the Book!

One of the most important aspects of our school culture is the trust we place in our teachers as professionals. Just as we've always done, we're considering Math in Focus one powerful tool in a broad toolbox of instructional materials and strategies that our teachers use to support student progress and engagement. Math is present throughout the learning day, as direct lessons and also in integrated ways during project-based science and social studies units. Each day, teachers assess progress formally and informally as children wrestle with mathematical ideas and take new steps as curious, capable problem solvers. No one curriculum can meet the wonderful range of interests, skills, and opportunities that our students bring to the classroom each day. Our teachers draw from experience and a wide set of tools to personalize instruction to meet students' needs. We encourage and celebrate these decision-making moments as an essential part of our commitment to a child-centered education.

Math Homework

Math homework may be assigned and will vary according to students' abilities, needs, and interests. Homework may be assigned when students require additional practice to support mastery as determined by teacher observations of student progress, as well as when assignments deepen student-driven learning and/or project-based learning. In addition, teachers will provide a menu of optional learning resources to support parents in extending their child's learning. In class, menus will be shared with children so that they can explore and express learning interests. We encourage parents to support children in selecting both the pace and the material as a means of fostering curiosity and helping children develop ownership over their own learning.

Throughout the school year, teachers will communicate with parents about student progress by sharing classroom assessments and work samples. In addition, parents will receive periodic Home-School Connections, a communication tool that is part of our Math in Focus program. These resources provide a window into the teaching and learning happening in the classroom, and provide strategies for home practice.

Sharing Student Progress

We're excited about where we're headed with mathematics, and the new learning goals that comprise the Common Core Standards. Chapter tests and classroom assessments will be shared with parents throughout the year. Students will also be taking benchmark assessments in December, March and May. Parents can expect to also receive these results. Please reach out to your child's teacher if you have questions about classroom learning or your child's progress. Check out this [video](#) to learn about the Common Core shifts in mathematics, review this [Grade-Specific Guide to Learning](#), or view the full set of K-12 mathematics standards [here](#).

Parent Support from Math in Focus

- [Kindergarten Videos](#)

- [1st Grade Videos](#)
- [2nd Grade Videos](#)
- [3rd Grade Videos](#)
- [4th Grade Videos](#)

Additional Resources for Parents

- [6 Ways to Support Your Child's Mathematical Development by Jo Boaler](#)
- [More Parent Resources from Jo Boaler, Stanford University](#)
- [Common Sense Media - List of Best Math Apps for Kids](#)

Best regards,

Pam Jasso, Principal
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Dates to Remember

- Oct. 22, R.O.P.E.S. Information Night, 4th Grade, 6:00 am
- Oct. 25, School Site Council, 3:05 pm
- Oct. 31, Heather Halloween Parade, 8:45 am
- Nov. 7, Picture Make up Day
- Nov. 8, School Board Meeting, 6:45
- Nov. 9, Start of Parent / Teacher Conference Week, Minimum Days
- Nov. 9, SCEF Faculty and Friends Concert, St. Charles Church, 5pm
- Nov. 12, Veterans' Day, School Holiday
- Nov. 13-16 Parent / Teacher Conference Week, Minimum Days
- Nov. 13, SCSD TK / Kindergarten Information Night, CMS, 6:30
- Nov. 19-23, Thanksgiving Vacation

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