



Math materials review brings suggestions, questions

Teachers and administrators from 23 elementary and six middle schools spent the week prior to the holiday break critiquing and recommending improvements to the first draft of Unit 1 math materials created by Pearson Education.

The most common suggestions recommended included greater use of manipulatives; differentiation of lessons to meet the needs of a diverse group of learners; use of technology in instruction; and high-level, rich questions that force students to think and make connections to prior knowledge and the real world.

In addition, the review posed several questions, including the following, related to the printed materials.

Why was the student text designed as a combination workbook and textbook?

The student work-text was conceived to bridge the gap between school and home as well as to address the problem of student mobility. When students take their books home, parents will be able to see all of their class notes and any previous homework they have completed. This may help parents better understand what their children are learning in class. When students move from school to school, their work-text will follow them the same way their writing folder does. When a teacher receives a new student transferring from another JCPS school, it will be evident if the student has missed any lessons and needs extra help.

How will we fill the gaps for students in upper grades who will miss curricula from earlier grades?

If a school is using the district curriculum map and the district math assessments, the students should not experience gaps as they transition into JCPS World-Class Standards. It is important to make sure that every student learns the material in the map at a particular grade level, because the content will not be repeated at multiple grade levels as in the past.

How much time will teachers spend teaching math each day?

The time allotted for core instruction ranges from 50 to 90 minutes a day for kindergarten through eighth grade. Intervention/Enrichment time ranges from an additional 30 to 40 minutes of instruction tailored to the level of student performance.

Now the ball is in Pearson's court to consider all of the schools' feedback and revise the materials accordingly. Working in conjunction with Pearson, the steering committee is revising the Materials Review and Validation schedule to include time for school teams to react to the revisions. An updated schedule will be sent to the elementary and middle school teams in early January.

What about science?

As district teachers wrapped up the first semester using science modules, they shared ideas about improving implementation in the future. The science department is offering the following modifications to the modules as a response to the teachers' suggestions.

Adjustments to assessments

The science department has collected information about module implementation through feedback forms that many teachers have completed. They will revise the current module assessments based on the teacher feedback received.

Change in seventh-grade module sequence

The Force and Motion module will be moved to the second semester. This provides more alignment with the math instruction students receive. By the time students encounter this module they should have a sufficient background in math to

complete the investigations and analyses. In addition, a joint math and science PD will be offered in the summer to help teachers learn non-algebraic ways to solve problems from the module.

Fifth-grade module modification

A curriculum developer from Lawrence Hall of Science will meet with the science department and some fifth-grade teachers to tweak lessons from the Weather and Water module. In particular, the group will address the level of mathematics needed to complete the module.

Critter Care PD

In the spring or summer, the science department will offer PD to train elementary and middle school teachers to care for the animals used in science module instruction. In addition, the district is working with supply companies to enhance communications and alleviate the problems encountered this year before next year's implementation.

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My question/concern/suggestion is: _____

From (Name): _____

Location: _____