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Sent time: 10/05/2020 03:15:55 PM
To: boe@d181.org
Cc: Hector Garcia <hgarcia@d181.org>; kathyrobinson@d181.org
Subject: D86 math pathways recommendation

Dear District 181 Board of Education and Administration,

It has come to my attention that you may be discussing our proposed move to an integrated math pathway during your board meeting this evening (Oct. 5). With this in mind, I am writing to offer my thoughts on the feedback that members of the District 181 community have shared about this recommended change, which we are scheduled to present to our board of education on Oct. 15.

During the past nine months, a team of dedicated and highly qualified teachers and administrators with nearly 150 years of combined experience in education, most of which has been spent teaching all types and levels of mathematics, has been working on the alignment of our math curriculum. As part of its work, which included hundreds of hours of study, research, outreach and analysis, the team invited representatives from all of our feeder schools to share their perspectives on the pathways we were considering. While most of our feeders expressed their support for a move to an integrated pathway, Dr. Robinson sent us a letter stating that your district does not. Unfortunately, that letter, which you have included in your board packet for this evening, is being used by members of your community to question the value and validity of our team's recommendation.

I realize that Learning for All has become the lens through which some individuals in your district view every proposed curricular change. I cannot speak to the success or failure of the program because I did not experience it, nor do I believe it is my place to comment on or question what another district does to help or support its students. What I can tell you is that there is no connection to or correlation between our decisions regarding math or science and the Learning for All program. Furthermore, we will not allow the perceived issues or challenges of another district's decision to be projected upon or direct the work we do or choices we make on behalf of our learners.

As I mentioned above, we will present our board with the recommendation about our math curriculum on Oct. 15. Any work that must be done following that discussion will continue to be led by our teachers, and, more importantly, be based on the needs of all of our students. If you would like us to publicly state during the board meeting that your district does not support our recommendation, please let us know.

In closing, I want to share one of the things that I have found truly ironic about our work on curriculum alignment. In so many of the emails we have been sent or comments we have received, people reference our district's national reputation and tradition of excellence. However, often in the same breath, they rattle off the names of all the other districts we should be following. While I fully recognize and firmly believe that we can always learn from our peers, and understand and appreciate how important it is to collaborate with them, we must not lose sight of the fact that the reputation we have earned and excellence we are known for are thanks, in large part, to the skills, knowledge, innovative spirit and expertise of our faculty and staff. I would like to think that their qualifications and credentials have earned them the respect and trust of this community when it comes to making decisions that they believe are best for our students.

Below are links to information about our recommended move to an integrated math pathway that I hope you will take the time to review if you have not done so already. The first one is a frequently asked questions document we created, and the other two are the video recordings of the virtual public forums we held on Sept. 24 and 28. While we have shared this information with the community several times during the past two weeks, please feel free to forward it to your families if you believe they will find it helpful.

Sincerely,

Tammy Prentiss
Superintendent

- [Frequently asked questions document about the recommended move to an integrated math pathway](#)

- [Math Pathways Community Forum on Sept. 24](#)
- [Math Pathways Community Forum on Sept. 28](#)

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“Remember, happiness is not just a mood- it’s a work ethic”
~Shawn Achor, *The Happiness Advantage*