

February 24, 2011

Oakwood City Schools Community Update: Everyday Math in the Elementaries

Dr. Kimberly Kappler Hewitt, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment



Following an extensive review process that began in the summer of 2005, Oakwood City School District began using a program called Everyday Math in grades K-4 during the 2006-2007 school year. The following year, based on teacher request, we began piloting the program in grades 5 and 6. Everyday Math is a rigorous, research-based math curriculum developed by the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project.

Since adopting EM, we have kept a close eye on our quantitative data and the qualitative data as reported by parents and teachers. While our benchmarks have yielded positive information about student achievement, we know that no program is “one size fits all” and that differentiating instruction is essential in the learning process.

Recently, some parents have raised questions and concerns about Everyday Math. As a district, we want to be responsive to these concerns. On February 10, the district held a meeting open to all Oakwood elementary parents to review Oakwood’s math data, discuss the process by which Oakwood came to adopt our Everyday Math program, what parents need to know about Everyday Math, and to address parents’ questions and concerns. If you missed the meeting and are interested in the student data and program overview, please visit: http://www2.oakwood.k12.oh.us/~cia/CIA/Curricular_Updates.html.

A follow-up meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, March 10, 7:00-8:30 PM in the Smith Elementary library. All elementary parents are invited to attend this meeting. This follow-up meeting is designed for parents to share their experiences with the Everyday Math Program, ask questions, and discuss strategies for bolstering every student’s opportunity for success.

The data on our elementary students’ math performance is consistent and clear: Our students are doing exceptionally well in math. On the Ohio Achievement Assessments, we are out-performing our similar districts (districts designated by the State of Ohio as being demographically similar to Oakwood) in both percent of students who pass the state’s math achievement assessments as well as the percent of students scoring in the two highest categories on the tests (advanced and accelerated). The one exception to this was this year’s third grade, in which a similar percent of students scored in the highest two categories on the test when compared to our similar districts. As you can imagine, our “similar districts” group is comprised of very high achieving districts, including Indian Hill, Wyoming, Ottawa Hills, Chagrin Falls, and Upper Arlington. The fact that our students are more successful on the math achievement assessments than our comparative district group reflects well on Oakwood. Additionally, our value added and Iowa Test of Basic Skills data are also very encouraging and suggest that our current math practices are serving students well. Indeed, we have seen our data on each of the three aforementioned metrics improve since the district adopted Everyday Math. This data is available at http://www2.oakwood.k12.oh.us/~cia/CIA/Curricular_Updates.html. That said, we recognize that Everyday

Math alone is not responsible for our strong data. Our district boasts exceptional teachers and parents who are our committed partners in education.

While these data are compelling and clearly support our students' success with the Everyday Math program, no math program will ever meet the needs of all students. As such, those students whose needs are not being met through Everyday Math need to have plans put in place to address their particular needs. The school district stands ready to assist in that process.

During the February 10 Everyday Math meeting, one specific challenge became apparent: There is a disconnect between teachers' and parents' expectations for how students approach their math homework and how much time is spent on it. This disconnect needs to be clarified and addressed, and we will revisit this topic at our next Everyday Math parent meeting (scheduled for 3/10 at 7:00 PM at Smith Elementary).

If you have questions, please contact me at 937-260-1380 or kapplerhewitt.kim@oakwoodschoools.org.