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Barrington parents go back to school

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BARRINGTON — For the last two weeks, Barrington elementary schools held several Back to School Nights, in which parents met with teachers and fellow parents to learn about what their children will be doing this school year.

“I think it’s a great opportunity for parents to get in and see what’s going on in the school,” said parent Amar Patel, who attended Back to School Night Aug. 29 at Rose Elementary.

Patel said he learned about the Singapore Math curriculum, which District 220 is implementing this year.

“It looks very progressive,” Patel said. “It looks like the right thing to do for our kids.”

Rose Elementary principal Scott Carlson said the new math curriculum is one of the biggest components of Rose school’s improvement plan.

“We expect the rigor to increase quite a bit,” said Carlson. “I think parents believe in and trust this option.”

At Rose Elementary, parents split up into groups and went into separate classrooms to hear what their children will be learning throughout the year. In one room, parents learned about a Chinese immersion program, in which the students are taught in Mandarin Chinese for half the day.

Carlson explained that Rose has the most diverse student population in the district.

“That’s really our strength,” he said.

Many parents of Rose students have experience with international business or were educated overseas, Carlson added, so they understand the importance of a second language.

Parents also learned about science, reading and emotional learning, which Carlson described as teaching children how to regulate their emotions.

Meg Simmons, who heads up the Parent Teacher Organization at Rose, said she thinks Back to School nights are a great idea.

“Especially for all our new parents coming in,” she said. “It’s nice to go into your child’s room and hear about the curriculum.”

Parents at Back to School Nights received welcome packets containing information on expectations and responsibilities of the students as they enter a new year.

“And they’re all very age-appropriate,” said Simmons.

Carlson reported that Back to School Nights are usually very well attended, with an estimated 90 percent of parents taking advantage of the opportunity. Every school in District 220, including Barrington High School, holds Back to School Nights.

Carlson said the district likes to wait until after the school year has begun for the year to hold the events. He said this gives parents and students a chance to fall into a routine.

Kim Ryder, a first-grade teacher at Rose, said Back to School Nights also provide teachers the benefit of meeting their students’ parents again.

“Because their support is so important to us,” she explained.

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