



Hampton Township School Board plans to adopt new elementary math program

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The Hampton Township School District Board of Directors had plans to approve the purchase and implementation of a new math series that drastically will change how math is taught in the district's three elementary schools.

On Monday, the board was scheduled to vote on the purchase of "Math in Focus," a math series that will align with the state's new common core standards, which outlines grade-level academic benchmarks.

A final vote was not available at press time.

"(The series) will be a big leap ... because the common core asks us to teach fewer concepts to a greater understanding," said Laurie Heinricher, curriculum director.

"Math in Focus" follows the "Singapore math" model that teaches concepts through real-world examples and hands-on experience.

The "Math in Focus" series as well as other math series were explored by a committee of 18 elementary teachers.

Katie Wagner, a first-grade teacher at Wyland Elementary, said she was skeptical about the Singapore math model until she saw it in practice during visits to the North Hills School District and Shady Side Academy, which use the series.

"The students understood the concept better than mine," Wagner said.

Assistant Superintendent Jo Welter said the new math series will be a significant change in teaching styles for the district teachers but one that will be necessary.

"The common core requires a big change in teaching methodology, and this resource will help us get to that change," she said.

The new math series outlines a three-year transition period and provides resources to train teachers to use the materials and information to help parents understand the new curriculum.

The estimated cost for the series is \$150,000 with an additional \$10,000 to \$15,000 for teacher training and professional development.

"One of the reasons we've been waiting for the right time (to implement the new series) ... it does require the training, but we'll commit to the training," said Superintendent John Hoover. "The board has to understand it will not be a cheap program, but it will be a good program."

Welter said she hopes to get the new resources to the teachers over the summer so they can start preparing for the first year of implementation.

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