



Hampton schools to cancel day of classes for teacher development day

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Hampton Township School District will cancel classes district-wide to allow for one additional professional development day for teachers this school year in preparation for implementing a new math curriculum in the elementary schools next year.

In a unanimous vote, the school board approved changing Friday, April 26, to a professional development day primarily so administrators can introduce teachers to the “Math in Focus” math series.

“I don't like to do this,” said Gail Litwiler, school board member and chairperson of the education committee, of the change. “But we really need to provide the training on the new program, and this is a way to do it before the end of the year.”

The school district plans to adopt the new math program next month in an effort to align with the state's new common core standards, which outlines grade-level academic benchmarks.

“Math in Focus” follows the “Singapore math” model that teaches concepts through real-world examples and hands-on experience, and district administration has called the new math series “a significant change” in teaching style that will require considerable training for teachers.

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

The board delayed the vote of “Math in Focus” to allow for the books to be on display for 30 days in the administration center and elementary buildings for teachers and community members to review. Superintendent John Hoover said canceling classes on April 26 for the professional development day was the “least disruptive” date in the district-wide calendar.

“We do think this is an important support we want to give to the elementary teachers,” Hoover said. “We want to give them every opportunity to feel comfortable with this, and this is a start.”

Though the day is primarily geared for elementary teachers, the teachers in the middle school and high school buildings also will take part in additional professional development that day.

Hoover said the change should not affect graduation or other scheduled days off. The district scheduled three school days in addition to the 180 required days to allow for snow cancellations.

“We may have to change this at the end if we get a number of snow days (before the end of the school year),” Hoover said. “But I'm being optimistic.”

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