

Windham schools request \$500K for new math curriculum

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WINDHAM — Superintendent Patricia Garcia is putting a strong emphasis on math at every level in the district and it carries a significant price tag.

To improve student achievement in math Garcia and the Board of Education are asking the town to invest \$500,000 in a new math curriculum. The money will be included in the town's capital spending proposal.

“We are doing curriculum maps for every subject to ensure curriculum is aligned,” Garcia said. “One area we must address is math.”

Assistant Superintendent Michael Conner said he and his staff conducted a programming audit that showed the math curriculum throughout the district was not properly aligned. The district was due to purchase new materials for one of its math programs, so that made the coming year a good time to switch programs.

In kindergarten through fifth-grade the district is piloting two programs, Math in Focus and Go Math. At the high school the district is piloting three programs, Houghton Mifflin AGA series, Pearson AGA series, and Houghton Mifflin Big Ideas series.

Conner said all of the programs have strong Spanish components.

Garcia said significant research and evaluation was done to make sure the programs suited the district's needs.

“We looked at what outcomes we wanted and what resources would be needed before we chose the programs to pilot,” she said.

Connor said the district also investigated how the programs worked in districts with similar student profiles.

The pilot programs are not yet done, Garcia said. She said the district is coming close to making a choice and she has contacted the publishers to ensure the \$500,000 request will cover all the costs.

Board of Education Chairman Tracy Lambert said the district and the town are working together much like it did to invest in a new reading curriculum two years ago, when the funding for the materials was pulled from the education budget and paid through the fund balance.

Lambert said the high school staff has also changed the way it issues text books to make sure everything issued to students is returned to the school.

“We’re taking more seriously the resources we have and maintaining them in a more responsible manner,” Lambert said.