

Mid-West School District

A Quality Education For All, For Life



February 29, 2016

To Mid-West School District Parents and Families:

I would like to take this opportunity to address some concerns expressed by Mid-West School District families about the enVision Math program. The concerns expressed are valid all are extremely important to the school district, as we try to address the challenges created by the revision of the academic standards across Pennsylvania. This challenge is one shared by students, parents, and school district officials across the state. The Mid-West School District would like to partner with the community to address these concerns and make your child's learning the best experience possible.

To provide background, as of March 1, 2014 new learning standards were adopted for use in public schools across the state of Pennsylvania. These were called the PA Core Standards, and they were designed to establish more rigorous, real world academic standards for the purpose of ensuring our young Pennsylvanians' success in life after high school. Math was most dramatically impacted by this change with many concepts appearing a full-year earlier in the standards and there being a much greater emphasis placed on the ability to exhibit higher level thinking skills and explain processes.

In the winter and early spring of 2014, the Mid-West School District administration put together a committee to research instructional Math programs. Over the course of several committee meetings, the district chose to pilot enVision Math to assess its viability in meeting these challenges in the 2014-15 school year. The enVision Program was chosen, in part, because it was not as radically different as some other approaches. However, the committee did realize that our community would feel the differences in this approach, and it was always a concern. The program was piloted in two classrooms at each grade level kindergarten through 6th grade. Over the course of the 2014-15 school year, the district collected student assessment data, spoke with teachers using the program, held parent information nights, and, ultimately, made the decision to seek board approval to implement enVision Math in the 2015-16 school year. The Mid-West School District Board of Directors approved the enVision Math Program in April 2015.

In an attempt to help with the transition our new materials into the curriculum to help meet the standards the following attempts were made some with greater level of success than others.

- Announcements about the new program were sent home to parents in the spring and fall.
- Parent informational nights were held in both the spring and fall to discuss the program.
- Materials were distributed in July to teaching staff and trainings were held on three occasions by pilot team members and enVision trainers. More trainings are schedule for March.
- Teachers were encouraged to scaffold or ease in new concepts as far as both the level of difficulty and as to how it is graded. (Example: Open-ended written responses not graded or skeletal outlines provided for the students to complete)
- On-line access and resources were provided to parents in an attempt to help explain processes and concepts taught in class.

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We understand that despite these efforts, many children and parents are still struggling to come to terms with the enVision Program and the challenges of the PA Core Standards. Because student learning is our foremost priority, no educator in the Mid-West School District want parents and students spending long frustrating evenings on math assignments or have great concerns about falling grades. So, to combat this, the Mid-West School District will now be offering math tutoring to elementary students and parents in grades Kindergarten through 5th to help assist families in our transition to enVision Math and the PA Core Standards. This tutoring will be provided from 3:15-4:00 on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. It will consist of review mini lessons on grade level specific content and time to assist students with Math homework. Parents are encouraged to attend with their child to help ease the stress of math time at home.

Additionally, we strongly encourage parents to contact your child's teacher, their principal, or myself with specific concerns about the enVision program. I can be reached at (570) 837-0046 (ext. 1201). Our goal is to alleviate your concerns and make the transition to the PA Core Standards as smooth as possible for all members of the school district. The enVision Math program is just one tool that was chosen to help us get there. With the help of our families, I believe we can do this!

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. Individual buildings will attach a tutoring schedule along with a permission slip. They are designed to depict all the important procedures for attending specific to the building.

Sincerely yours,

Joe Stroup, Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Mid-West School District