



## SUTTON PARENT MEETING

### RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

#### **1. What is the district's plan to ensure that all teachers are of a high and consistent quality?**

The district is committed to the ongoing capacity building of its teachers. Great diligence is taken to deepen their content knowledge as well as to solidify their understanding of the essential instructional practices. To ensure transference to and quality implementation in the classrooms, onsite coaching and support are rendered by our site-based instructional coaches along with our district content coordinators and content specialists, who are experts in the field. The learning opportunities presented throughout the professional learning purposely connect to key aspects of effective school practice that lead to increased student achievement: standards-aligned curriculum; intentional instructional practices, including differentiation of instruction; assessment for learning; and lesson/classroom design. In addition to the professional learning of our teachers, the district is equally committed to supporting our principals so they are better poised to serve as instructional leaders. As such, they are held able to come along side teachers and support them as they plan, facilitate, and assess the effectiveness of teaching and learning in the classrooms. The Chief Schools and Academic Office team supports principals and assistant principals on this path by ensuring they receive similar professional learning, joining them in observing the quality of instruction in the classroom, and providing customized, constructive feedback. This dual approach, direct professional learning to teachers and enhancing the capacity of principals to lead academically, is transforming teacher practice and student learning.

#### **2. Where are the exam questions coming from?**

Assessments, which are embedded in the units of study, come from a variety of sources, including GADOE and are assembled by the district office. Teachers have the flexibility to build additional course assessments using a wide range of resources, including the course-selected textbook. The questions on the district benchmark assessment are furnished by a district-approved vendor but vetted by district content experts to ensure content validity.

#### **3. How do the assessment questions relate to the textbook?**

The curriculum is a derivative of the state-mandated standards. No one textbook is fully aligned to the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE), which are our state standards. Therefore, the assessment items embedded within the units of study and those that reflected on benchmark assessments do not directly correlate to any textbook, as the GSE, not the textbook, drive the content of what is assessed.

#### **4. Why not use national text questions offered by text publisher?**

While textbook publishers attempt to align themselves to state standards, no one textbook is fully aligned. Because there are nuances to the Georgia Standards of Excellence, such as specific vocabulary, the placement of standards, etc., the assessment items used for the benchmark exams are vetted for

alignment to the intentionality of the GSE (content standards and the Standards for Mathematical Practice), so that these standards can be effectively measured.

**5. How and who is checking the Benchmark assessments before they are administered?**

The benchmark assessment items are vetted by various district staff. This vetting ensures that items are congruent with the GSE content standards and math practices, as well as aligned to the APS pacing guides, in accordance with the APS standards of service.

**6. I have been told that the graded math test cannot go home with students, and that if a parent wants to see the test, he must make an appointment with the math teacher. What is the purpose of this?**

The fundamental purpose of benchmark assessments is to assess students' understanding of a subset of the content standards. Although these assessments are scored, they are considered formative, and hence, are not graded. The data from the assessments are used to identify students' strengths and areas of growth relative to previously taught content; inform instructional planning; and adjust curriculum, instruction, & professional learning by making mid-course modifications if warranted.

**7. How was the Mathematically Proficient Disposition Rubric created?**

The Mathematically Proficient Disposition Rubric was created using the language of the Standards for Mathematical Practice, which are a critical component of the Georgia Standards of Excellence for Mathematics. These Standards for Mathematical Practice are the habits of mind that serve as the gateway to obtaining mastery of the content standards.

**8. How is the score on the Mathematically Proficient Disposition Rubric determined, and what does it mean?**

Teachers complete the Mathematically Proficient Disposition Rubric to indicate how a student exhibits the habits of mind prescribed by the Standards for Mathematical Practice. All highly-proficient students will attend to these habits of mind, in conjunction with the content standards. The Mathematically Proficient Disposition Rubric summarizes how the student evidences these habits of mind.

**9. What happens if a student meets 3 out of 4 categories on the math placement criteria?**

Students who meet 3 out of the 4 criteria for placement into accelerated math may be considered for placement through local school decision with district support.

**10. Will the criteria for 2017-2018 remain the same or will it change again?**

The criteria for placement will remain the same for the 2017-2018 school year.

**11. My 4th grade tested out of 4th grade Milestones standards at the beginning of the year. Why can't she be accelerated?**

APS did not offer an opportunity to "test out" of 4th grade standards during the 2016-2017 school year. We are unaware of the data points that were used to convey this information to you. A determination of your child's ability to accelerate is assessed using multiple data points as reflected by the placement criteria.

**12. What will the 6th grade students who are in year ahead math take next year?**

Sixth grade students who are currently taking Grade 7 Math will take Grade 8 Math during their 7th grade year.

**13. With no elementary accelerated math, how are you meeting the needs of advanced children?**

Acceleration is a form of differentiated instruction. As such, acceleration can occur in multiple fashions. The most selected provision for acceleration is departmentalized classes. While the North Atlanta cluster has opted not to offer acceleration in this fashion, in accordance with IB requirements, acceleration can occur in a cluster model within the classroom. As teachers provide small-group instruction to students, they are able to provide targeted instruction that meets the needs of the students they serve.

**14. Once a student enters Sutton middle school at on-level math, is there any chance for advancement before high school?**

Yes, students who do not meet the criteria for acceleration upon entering Sutton Middle School, but are able to demonstrate “readiness” later, may be considered for advancement. However this is rare, and will be measured on a case by case basis.

**15. Will grade 8 math be levelled?**

No, students in grade 8 will have the opportunity to participate in two different math pathways. The on-level pathway where they will take Grade 8 Mathematics or the accelerated pathway where they will take Algebra I.

**16. Do IB students have to take IB Math?**

Yes, students seeking an IB diploma must take IB math.

**17. Are there any plans to offer IB Math HL at North Atlanta High School?**

No, at this time the students’ needs drive the schedule. Therefore, based on the data IB Math SL is most appropriate course for the students. Additionally, IB Math HL is somewhat equivalent in rigor found in AP Calculus BC, which students have the option of taking concurrently with IB Math.

**18. How does IB math compare to AP Calculus?**

AP Calculus AB is roughly equivalent to a first year college calculus course. IB math is an infused math course which includes a beginning look at calculus concepts, but focuses more on the development of mathematical techniques in real world contexts.

**19. Can students take college courses instead of AP courses?**

Yes, students can take college courses through the Move On When Ready (MOWR) Dual Enrollment Program, in conjunction with approved colleges and universities.

**20. Which college/university do students at NAHS take courses at?**

Students must be accepted to the college or university of their choosing from the approved Move On When Ready Eligible Institutions list. Most of the current students at NAHS commute to Georgia State, Kennesaw or West Georgia to take college courses since transportation is not provided.

**21. Has anyone followed the NAHS students who took accelerated math /calculus into college to see how well prepared they are?**

Although the district is able to gather persistence data pertaining to students who enroll in a post-secondary institution, we are unable to gather quantitative data regarding students' performance relative to a specific course/content area. The most recent persistence to year two of college data indicate that 85% of NAHS students successfully matriculated from one year to the next.

**22. When were textbooks made available to students?**

While technology challenges have delayed the release of the online component of newly adopted Gr. 6-8 textbooks. Textbooks were delivered to all schools from July 11 – 22, 2016, before the first day of instruction. More specifically, Sutton Middle School received the following textbooks on July 19<sup>th</sup>:

- Gr. 6: Course 1 - 668 books
- Gr. 7: Course 2 - 624 books
- Gr. 8: Course 3 - 672 books

These amounts were correlated with the grade-level enrollment at Sutton as of 7/31/2016. While all textbooks were shipped to the Northside Dr. campus, the Gr. 6 resources were subsequently taken to the 6<sup>th</sup> grade campus. In regard to the online access, the district is working diligently with the publisher to resolve the challenges.