



Why *Everyday Mathematics* is Right for The Menlo Park City School District

The Objective of the Mathematics Adoption:

March 2009

Ensure that the mathematics instructional program has emphasis on algebraic thinking, logic, problem solving as well as computation and procedures to assist teachers at all grade levels with the necessary pedagogical changes necessary to improve student achievement, challenge all learners and prepare all students for advanced mathematics.

The Math Adoption Review Process:

The District conducted a comprehensive study during which numerous programs were assessed relative to the math adoption's criteria.

- A District Mathematics Committee representing all schools and every grade level worked for 1 1/2 years defining the District's needs, reviewing available textbook series and developing a recommendation for Board consideration.
- Parents selected from each school's Site Council reviewed all materials as part of the selection process.
- The adoption process included notification of District parents prior to the adoption decision via the District Newsletter, discussions at two meetings of the Board, and the display of materials for parent and Community review.
- Each member of the Board of Education reviewed the materials prior to the adoption at the December 2008 Regular Board Meeting.

Why *Everyday Mathematics* is Right for the Menlo Park City School District:

- The District's current mathematics program—particularly in the elementary grades—is highly focused on computation and procedures. *Everyday Mathematics* is a balanced program focusing on computational and procedural mastery as well as conceptual understanding and problem solving.
- Our elementary teachers have varied experience and expertise in the teaching of mathematics. *Everyday Mathematics* includes tools, information and teacher materials to support both novice and experienced teachers.
- The District is committed to differentiation of instruction to ensure responsiveness to all learners. *Everyday Mathematics* includes formative and summative assessments and a wide array of resources and materials that assist with differentiating mathematics instruction to respond to various levels of student ability; from accelerated to remedial.
- The District is focused on improving the achievement of subgroups of students who are under-performing. *Everyday Mathematics* provides materials and strategies that can be used for academic intervention programs outside of the regular classroom, including materials for parents to assist students at home.
- The District's Strategic Plan calls for instructional programs in all academic areas to promote thinking and intellectual curiosity. *Everyday Mathematics* promotes critical thinking and problem solving at all grade levels while building and maintaining automatic recall of math facts.
- The District's Spanish Immersion Program at the elementary levels continues to evolve. *Everyday Mathematics* is one of the State adopted textbook programs that is also published in Spanish.
- An important Strategic Goal of the District is the development of partnerships with parents and families that reinforce learning at home. *Everyday Mathematics* provides information for ongoing communication with parents and specialized instructional materials to involve families in the learning process.

- Several public school districts with comparable demographics to our district have reported higher achievement levels in mathematics, particularly in the number of students that achieve proficiency in algebra by the eighth grade. *Everyday Mathematics* is being used by high achieving school districts such as Portola Valley, Hillsborough, Saratoga, Piedmont, and Woodside.
- It is the District's practice to adopt research-based instructional programs. Student achievement results have been verified by numerous research studies including the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project, National Academy of Science, and What Works Clearinghouse of the U.S. Department of Education.

What our Teachers and Administrators are Saying about *Everyday Mathematics*:

For the past several years, fifth grade teachers at Encinal and Oak Knoll Schools have used *Everyday Mathematics* with their accelerated math groups. The following is what our teachers and their principals have to say about *Everyday Mathematics*:

I love Everyday Mathematics because it meets the needs of each and every one of my students. It has everything that I need as a teacher to make math meaningful.

When I asked my students to comment on the program, two fifth graders said, 'You can take Everyday Math away from me but you cannot take Everyday Math out of me.' Another commented, 'I like the math boxes because they review what's been covered and help me learn what I don't understand by trying different methods'.

I studied the strategies of high performing school districts and noticed three commonalities: involvement of the district in the Silicon Valley Math Initiative; Saturday Academies for under-performing students, and the adoption of Everyday Mathematics as the core instructional materials. I am happy that Encinal has engaged all three.

Parents are invited to visit my classroom and observe how Everyday Mathematics is working to meet the needs of all students, particularly accelerated students that need an additional challenge.

Sue Preston, 5th grade Encinal Math Teacher

Everyday Mathematics offers problem-solving rich in multi-step experiences where students engage in activities that combine skills and reasoning. This format supports student development of problem solving skills that include prediction, tapping into prior knowledge, identifying step-by-step processes, and reflection. Assessment pieces offer the teacher a view to students' skill bases and thinking skills by requiring them to explain their answers and "show how they know."

Joan Van Der Linden,

Former Oak Knoll 5th Grade Teacher, Current Assistant Principal of Encinal

I use Everyday Mathematics in my extended 5th grade class. The program does an outstanding job educating teachers about effective ways to teach math. It not only covers the specific grade level being taught, but also exposes the teacher to what the children have learned in previous years and what they can expect to be taught in future grades. In just one year, I have learned so much more about effectively teaching mathematics by using the program. Because it is a spiral curriculum—and very well organized one—I am really looking forward to teaching students that have benefited from Everyday Mathematics.

Jon Coldorff, Current Oak Knoll 5th Grade Teacher

An analysis of Menlo Park students' mathematics testing data indicates very high levels of achievement. However, both the data and teacher experiences also point to relative weaknesses in our students' problem solving abilities and conceptual understanding. Everyday Mathematics was chosen because of its strengths in these two areas. This series ensures that students understand the mathematics that support the use of standard algorithms. This conceptual understanding coupled with mastery of basic facts, enable students to solve complex mathematical problems and to move forward with complete understanding of the more abstract and algebraic representation of mathematics.

David Ackerman, Principal of Oak Knoll School

Everyday Mathematics will elevate the math program for all students. Students are required to learn computation skills and to apply these skills in a problem-solving context. Reasoning and problem-solving are essential skills that students will need in the 21st Century. Everyday Mathematics coupled with support from the Silicon Valley Math Initiative, will ensure that our teachers have the necessary tools and methods to deliver a rigorous, differentiated mathematics program that will prepare students for advanced mathematics in middle school and high school.

Allison Liner, Principal of Encinal School