

GC-4 Teachers Design Math Benchmarks To Enhance Student Achievement

Approximately 25 district teachers (grades 5-12) spent the week of June 13th-17th at Grandview High School, working collaboratively to design math benchmarks around the Missouri Grade/Course Level Expectations (commonly referred to as GLEs/CLEs) and the district Math Power Standards. Math benchmarking is a process where teachers identified those math concepts and skills students must master at each grade level/course, followed by the development of the actual benchmarks (mini common assessments), which indicate students' mastery of the skills and concepts.

Once developed, the teachers ordered the math benchmarks and developed a pacing calendar which will be used in every Grandview C-4 school. The benchmarks were clustered into "scrimmages" (more comprehensive common assessments), which students take approximately every 2 weeks. Scrimmages require students



to move from skill acquisition to applying their knowledge through the completion of more rigorous and complex problems. They are also designed to "spiral" the learning, to ensure that previously mastered skills and concepts are retained in students' long-term memory.

GHS teachers who give the EOC (End of Course) exams have been participating in math benchmarking for the past 3 years. Extending the math benchmarking down through the middle schools and into the 5th grade is a huge step in ensuring every student at GC-4 has a consistent experience, regardless of their school or classroom teacher assignment. As a result of implementing this anchor strategy, a common assessment format, language, pacing calendar, and grading system will now be used in the math content area for all students in grades 5-12. This initiative moves GC-4 to implementing a guaranteed and viable curriculum for every student, which will result in students exiting high school with the necessary college and career readiness skills. Many districts implementing this initiative have seen tremendous academic gains, and GC-4 teachers and administration believes this work will have a positive impact on student achievement levels.

This curriculum work was supported through collaborative efforts between the district Curriculum & Instruction (C & I) department and the PREP-KC organization. GC-4 is currently in the process of scheduling ongoing collaborative curriculum release days throughout the 2011-12 school year, where teachers across multiple grade levels will come together and use student achievement data to refine their teaching and students' learning around math.