

Have You Heard?

Red Clay will introduce the country's top-rated math program in its middle schools in the coming school year.

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Purchased with funds approved in the 2015 Operating Referendum, the new math materials – called “Illustrative Mathematics” - will be for grades 6 to 8. Also purchased was a high school curriculum called “envision A/G/A” which will be used in all Algebra 1, Geometry and Algebra 2 classes.

The 2015 referendum also paid for 1:1 computers in the district, where every child in grades 3 to 12 was issued their own Chromebook. The new math materials will be accessible in print as well as via Schoology and the internet.

“The two initiatives combined will offer a new math experience in the district with more rigor and the tools for our students to succeed,” said Jodi Albers, the district’s mathematics supervisor. “We are very excited to be offering these new programs to our students.”

During the 2017-2018 school year, a yearlong trial of the high school materials and a multi-month trial of the middle school materials was held in several middle and high schools. There was near unanimous approval of the new materials from teachers, said Albers. “Many of our teachers used these materials in their classrooms and recommended they be available to students across the district,” she said.

One teacher wrote about the middle school materials, “IM (Illustrative Mathematics) has made it easier for students to grasp the information. My students have seen expressions and equations before, IM made it more relatable for students.”

Math teachers spent the last two days of the school year at an intensive training on the new materials. Secondary administrators attended the sessions as well.

Red Clay has also received a \$150,000 “Reimagine Professional Learning” grant from the Delaware Department of Education for ongoing training for middle school teachers.

“Our goal here is to ensure high achievement in our mathematics classes,” said Albers. “Especially with 21st Century STEM learning, which requires a level of math skills that depend on problem solving and perseverance.”

The Algebra 1, Geometry and Algebra 2 materials will be available to all on the Chromebook; print materials will be provided in class. Individual student books will not be issued, however the student book will be loaded onto the Chromebooks, allowing students to access the materials without the internet. For those students who would like a book, they can check out one from the library for the school year, said Albers.

Included in the materials are many virtual manipulatives, including the DESMOS online graphing calculator, making it much more interactive.

Students will practice the new math at home during homework. Albers said parents should resist the urge of trying to become the teacher.

“Homework should be a practice of what the student already knows,” she said. “The teacher uses homework as a way to gauge what a student knows and is able to do. From there, the teacher is able to tailor instruction to meet the needs of each students. Parents can offer a nurturing environment, a quiet space and a consistent time.”

Albers said the district is ready. “We have full faith that our students are ready for the next step in their education, and our teachers are there to support them,” she said. “Our teachers have been working very hard. They are waiting, they are ready, and they are excited.”