

Email to parents of D90 Third Grade Parents and Caregivers 2/4/2019



River Forest  
Public Schools

Dear Third Grade Parent or Caregiver,

As part of the D90 Strategic Plan, the District has been working hard over the last several years to align curricula and learning experiences for our students. One of the most important goals was achieved with the introduction of a new mathematics curriculum last year, and the positive experiences of our teachers and students have been exciting to watch.

Much of the success of this new curriculum adoption stems from the way that it reflects the developmental needs of students as they progress through the math sequence. Current evidence of best practices in math instruction guides schools away from providing “pull out” accelerated math instruction too soon. In the elementary grades, individual student development is still highly variable. If leveled math instruction begins prematurely, there is a risk that some students who might otherwise qualify for acceleration might not have the opportunity to participate. Importantly, the research also indicates positive benefits for high-performing students when they have the initial opportunity to refine their skills in a mixed ability elementary classroom, before receiving accelerated coursework in subsequent years. This helps to ensure a strong conceptual math foundation and ensures that advanced students do not experience gaps in knowledge that can result when bypassing essential content.

One of the student assessments that the District has used in the past to identify students for leveled math programming is the CogAT (Cognitive Abilities Test). This assessment is very valid and reliable in measuring cognitive abilities. However, it is not aligned with the Illinois Learning Standards and does not provide the most instructive data for our teachers about student math proficiency. For this reason, the District will be discontinuing its use in Grade 3, and will be predominantly assessing student growth in mathematics through the MAP assessment (traditionally administered in District 90 each fall and spring). The CogAT will remain in use in Grade 4 and above.

We believe very strongly in providing appropriate challenges for all of our students and appreciate your ongoing partnership and support. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,  
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