

## ***Budget Questions Responses***

***January 26, 2020***

What is the cost breakdown, per item for the proposed Fairfield Ludlowe concession stand renovations?

On Friday we provided the itemized list of work to be done to add a locker room to the second floor of the FLHS concession stand. We do not have a breakdown of costs per item. The architect provides a cost estimate based on the square footage and the items requested for the refurbished space.

### **Math Academy**

It is the recommendation of the district administration that the Math Academy be implemented as requested in the proposed budget.

There are two fundamental reasons supporting this recommendation.

- It is clear from the educator, parent, and student feedback that the program is filling a learning need for students. This speaks to a need that was not met by our current curriculum, professional learning, and deployment of staff.
- However, the stated concerns with the program have merit. Grouping students by ability at an early age, and throughout the day, is not a recommended practice. The program does require a funding level that is not equitable with other student learning needs in the district. We do expect more students will qualify in time. We have great concerns with the gender equity issue that has been identified in program selection.

In addition the administration would add concerns about the alignment of other elementary programs such as Gifted, STEAM, and grade 5 departmentalization – how do these pieces fit together? How do they fit with the curriculum, professional learning, and deployment of staff? To answer these questions requires time and staff collaboration. It cannot be done in an evening.

We do not believe that complex instructional decisions can be made as part of the Board's budget process. We brought forward the current Math Academy plan because it works right now. We do not believe it will work, as is, in time. We need time, as a team of teachers, administrators, parents, and Board members, to make the best decisions for the students, and place the Academy in the context of other decisions currently being addressed in the district. In particular, we will be proposing math curriculum changes within a year. At that time we will have a better understanding of how to best meet the learning needs of our upper elementary students. For 20-21 we need to stay with our funding request.

### **Questions**

**Is the \$4,000 in the budget for summer curriculum work for grades 4 and 5?**

It is for grade 5.

**What is the enrollment breakdown of Math Academy students by home school?**

Counts by school:

School	Invitations	Accepted
Burr	4	3
Dwt	6	1
HH	4	4
Jen	3	0
Mck	0	0
MH	3	1
NSS	1	0
OH	6	0
Rv	8	0
RS	3	2
Strat	2	2

**Would eliminating the Math Academy result in a net reduction of 1 FTE since you would need to add one fifth grade classroom?**

This year entering fourth grade students from one of our elementary schools allowed us to reduce a classroom section at that school and keep the net FTE impact from the Academy at 0. If the grade 5 Math Academy was eliminated it is possible that we would need to add an additional classroom section at that school. This addition would be offset in the proposed budget if the grade 4 Math Academy classroom was eliminated.

**It would appear to be about a wash if the academy was eliminated in this budget and funds reallocated to the 5th grade FTE and summer workshop. Is that accurate?**

It is approximately the same but as stated above it is not a recommended substitution.

**What would it take to expand the advanced math program to 2 more elementary schools (considering feeder patterns) in order for all 40+ students identified to be able to access this curriculum? Would it be possible to allow the students to join the art, music, PE, STEAM classrooms during that block of time but have their grade-level instruction in a separate classroom?**

**Is there room at Dwight? Jennings?**

To start two additional Math cohorts would require two grade 4 classrooms. The program is designed to cover 3 years of curriculum in 2 calendar years; students could not start the program in grade 5. Therefore it would require 2 additional FTE and additional costs of \$3,000 for summer training.

Students in the Math Academy do take part in all specials. They could not join other classrooms in those specials as it would make class sizes out of contractual compliance.

There is likely to be room at Dwight and Jennings and possibly other schools.