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# Reading Public Schools

*Instilling a joy of learning and inspiring the innovative leaders of tomorrow*

TO: Families of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students  
DATE: September 20, 2019  
FROM: Heather Leonard, STEM Curriculum Coordinator  
TOPIC: Middle School Mathematics Curriculum Tools Pilot

This fall, Reading Public Schools is conducting a pilot of curriculum tools for mathematics. This pilot is the next step in a review process that began in the fall of 2018 with the goal of identifying and acquiring new curriculum tools. Seventh and eighth grade math teachers (excluding Algebra courses) are piloting two different curriculum tools using a unit-based pilot structure. The curriculum and content of the mathematics courses remains the same - the curriculum *tools* are the focus of the pilot.

## **Pilot Structure**

A team of Reading educators designed the unit-based pilot structure. In a traditional pilot structure, certain teachers pilot one tool for an entire school year - this limits teacher exposure to only that tool. The unit-based structure allows *all* teachers to use *both* curriculum tools - allowing them to better incorporate their personal experience and the experiences of their students when making recommendations. A unit may take between 3-5 weeks. The team was very thoughtful in their selection of which units to pilot so as to avoid any disruption to the grade level curriculum.

The unit-based design will provide us with a robust range of data and feedback about each tool. Teachers at Coolidge and Parker will pilot a different curriculum tool during round one, then they will switch during round two. This means that we will pilot 3 different units per round of each curriculum tool, providing us with feedback from up to 12 different units.

## **Pilot Timeline**

The math pilot process began in December 2018 when the district math teachers met to identify the priorities and needs for math curriculum tools. A team of teachers and administrators worked from January -June 2019 to develop our rubric and deeply analyze each potential tool. A summer committee comprised of math and special education teachers, a technology integration specialist, and administrators, met to plan the pilot structure. The committee also used current pacing guides to identify and select specific units to be piloted at each grade.

Data from reflection and feedback forms will be analyzed to inform the curriculum tool recommendation. We plan to have a decision about which tool made by the end of December 2019. The rollout of a new program is expected to begin early 2020. We anticipate the entire pilot process will take 1½ years. Please note that

throughout this process, students and teachers have access to the current Digits curriculum materials online and in print.

### **Pilot Training & Preparation**

Training and professional development for the pilot tools began as early as this summer. The publishers have provided PD to our summer committee, held a drop-in PD for teachers prior to school starting, and provided a full day of learning on Friday, September 20 for all pilot staff. Once we select our curriculum tool, even more training will be provided throughout the implementation process. The advantage to a planned “overlap” window (i.e. January-June 2020) of implementation is that it will allow teachers to get their hands on the tools, try them out, collaborate to build and plan their units, while continuing to have access to their prior curriculum tools at the same time.

### **Pilot Resources**

Publishers for both curriculum tools provided materials and resources for all students to use in the classroom, however there are not enough materials for all students at both schools to take hard copies home. Each student will have access to the online components, which include every aspect of the curriculum tool *including* the student text. This level of access allows teachers to try using all components of the curriculum tools and consider which are beneficial to their instruction.

### **Pilot Contact**

Should you have additional questions about the pilot process structure, or timeline, please reach out to Heather Leonard, STEM Curriculum Coordinator - [heather.leonard@reading.k12.ma.us](mailto:heather.leonard@reading.k12.ma.us)