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**[External Email] BOE Comment 10/16**

1 message

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Mon, Oct 16, 2023 at 4:34 PM

**Woodbridge BOE,**

Thank you for the opportunity to share our experience and our concerns with the lack of advanced math curriculum in the fifth and six grade at Beecher Road school. We currently have one son in the sixth grade at Beecher Road school, but he is the youngest of three that have moved from Beecher through AMSB an onto Amity Regional HighSchool. We are familiar with the options offered at AMSB and the rigor required. I share the experience of my current six grader to offer a perspective on why I think it is a disservice to a certain population of children in our community to not offer an advanced math track or cohort.

Our son has been able to do mathematical computations in his head since a very early age. We knew elementary school would propose quite a challenge in this dichotomy of loving math, but not loving math class at school due to the simplicity of basic concepts covered in the early grades. We are so fortunate that we were able to choose the MAG experience so that his educational focus in grades one through four were much more diverse. In moving on to fifth grade math, we recognized that the new challenge of math coming so easily, is lack of preparation for the middle school years in having to do the work, and be diligent in practice.

Our son was very excited this past spring to learn that he had qualified to take a placement test to be able to be in an advanced math cohort in the six grade. When we learned that he had scored just a few percentage points below the 80% required to be placed in this group, we reached out to do a little investigation. We learned that the test was based on six grade material, and so based on exposure to certain concepts rather than mathematical acuity. This summer Mrs. Sherman assured us that they would find a way for those students who needed extra challenge to be able to participate in a cohort within 6th grade math.

We understand that every school has struggles with being able to provide everything for every student, staffing challenges and stressors. We have tried to be very accommodating with a new math teacher in the six grade, reaching out to her and asking about differentiation. Mrs. Sherman also seemed confident that 'pre-assessments would be given so differentiation could take place'. Unfortunately, we have been told by our son's math teacher that because all of the six grade material is new, that they will not be giving pre-assessments at all. We have been told that 'challenge work' is being offered to all, but we've seen it is just busy-work, not challenge work.

In summary, we feel it is very important that students who are excited about math, and have strong math skills have the opportunity to work with someone who will engage them with the same level of excitement, and provide challenging material. I am personally on the fence about students moving so early into algebra and geometry, even though we know our son is capable. What is important to me is that school and learning is a positive experience and the love of learning is fostered. We strongly encourage the Board of Education to make a statement of proposal to differentiate mathematics education in the fifth and sixth grade at Beecher Road school.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration,

**Kris and Matt Edwards**

Sent from my iPhone