

SENATE BILL 311 FOLLOW-UP

Over the course of the past two months, I have written two different articles concerning Senate Bill 311, otherwise known as the Ohio Core Curriculum Bill. In those articles, I shared with you the various curriculum requirements for a student graduating with the Class of 2014 (this year's fifth graders). I also shared with you my concerns regarding this new law.

However, concerns notwithstanding, SB 311 is now law. As such, the Adams County/Ohio Valley School District will be required to follow the law, as will all other school districts across Ohio. I would like to re-emphasize from an earlier article on SB 311 that I do not believe this to be a good law for students simply because it basically tries to put every student into the same mold. Time will tell. However, I didn't say that is was impossible to implement. Here are some of the reasons why, as well as some things already in place to help implement this new law.

If you examine the State Curriculum Model for Math, you will see that strands of algebra exist all the way down to the kindergarten level. Since our school district is using a recently-adopted curriculum for all core subjects, including math, our students are already benefiting from this. In addition, our school district personnel wrote and put together Short Cycle Assessments (SCAs) for all of the core subject areas including math. These SCAs are in their first full year of use across all core subject areas K-10. Teachers will be getting together to revise the SCAs at the end of the school year, based upon

strength of the questions and association with the State Content Standards. This should be another plus for our students.

Over the course of the past two years, many of our elementary teachers who teach math have been trained in two different math programs. Ohio Mathematics Academy Project - I (OMAP-I) is specifically designed to help elementary teachers deliver quality instruction on the algebra strand within the State Content Standards. Another program, Cognitive Guided Instruction (CGI), promotes higher level thinking skills in math. It also helps students gain a deeper understanding of number sense and mathematic principles. The program is focused on the K-2 and K-3 levels. Students often use hands-on manipulatives and advance on to drawings to assist them in demonstrating mastery of math skills. At the 7-12 level, many of our math teachers have been trained in OMAP-I (algebra) and OMAP-II (geometry). It is obvious that follow-up “refresher” courses will be helpful to those teachers who have already received these trainings, while any new math teacher who has not been previously trained in these programs will need to seek out and be provided training.

Not only do strands of algebra appear throughout the math curriculum and on our SCAs, algebra-related questions appear on the various grade level State Achievement Tests. Such questions also appear on the Ohio Graduation Test. In addition to Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, and other math classes being offered in our high schools, we also offer Integrated Math I, II, and III. These classes look at a less than traditional way of

teaching algebra and geometry concepts to our students through a more hands-on approach.

Obviously, all of these pieces will be fine tuned from year to year. The point is that many of the components necessary to help students succeed under the Core Curriculum are already in place. Other possible changes will be implemented as, or if, needed. Does this mean that our efforts will produce the kind of results expected in the Ohio Core Curriculum Bill? No, but it doesn't mean that we won't achieve the desired results either. In the end, I feel that the absolute key to a high level of success with Ohio Core hinges upon an even closer, stronger bond between the individual students, the parent, and the school. I know, without a doubt, that the absence of strong channels of communication between these three groups will be very harmful to any chances of success with the requirements of SB 311.

REVISED EXTERIOR PLANS

In the near future, I will be receiving some revised plans for the front entrance design of the new Peebles Elementary School. I would encourage folks in the Peebles area to check out this revised design on the school district website, and let the board members and/or me know what you think of it. Simply, go to www.ovsd.us, scroll down and click on the link "Building Project Update." Then, scroll down to the "Proposed Building Plans" for the new PES. You will definitely see the revised design and, hopefully, the original front entrance design as well, so that you can make a comparison. Again, this revised entrance design will be posted as soon as we receive it. It will also be available

on the PASS website (www.superschools.org). Though the date has not been selected yet, another series of staff and community meetings may be scheduled once we receive the revised plans in order to obtain more school/community input on the front entrance design of the new Peebles Elementary building.

As always, if you have any questions or comments on this article, feel free to contact me at 544-5586. Thank you.

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Superintendent