



ALPINE SCHOOL DISTRICT

575 NORTH 100 EAST AMERICAN FORK, UTAH 84003-1758

January 27, 2003

Shannon Cannon
981 E Russel Rd.
Eagle Mtn, Ut. 84043

Dear Parent,

Thank you for your interest regarding the math program in Alpine School District. We understand and appreciate your concern for your child's education.

The Alpine District School Board and the curriculum department remain committed to standards-based math, the basis of *Investigations* and *Connected Math*. This commitment is based on the success in other districts nationwide, as well as, the deepened understanding we have witnessed with our own students. For your information, we are enclosing a copy of the school Board statement regarding the math program.

There have been some changes in the math homework that should be helpful. They are as follows:

- Added parent notes communicating the mathematical concept and relevance of the homework assignment
- Clarification of the instructions to the homework assignment
- Additional drill and practice homework (teacher discretion)
- Drill of basic facts and assessment in 3rd and 4th grades (teacher discretion)
- We are also developing specific multiplication assessments for 4th grade to evaluate our students' progress toward the State Core objective regarding recall of multiplication facts.

If you have concerns regarding the implementation at a particular school, please contact the principal at that school. If your concerns are more general, please contact one of us at the district office. We can arrange classroom observations or set up appointments to discuss your concerns.

Sincerely,

Dr. Gary Seastrand, Asst. Supt.
K-6 Schools (north)

John Burton, Administrator
K-6 Schools (central)

Karen Wathen, Director
K-6 Curriculum & Staff Development

Barry Graff, Administrator
K-6 Schools (south)

**ALPINE SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION STATEMENT
RE: INVESTIGATIONS
November 26, 2002**

We have heard from some of our patrons concerning the standards-based math programs in many of our schools. We know that there are some who wish to return to a traditional approach but many others are firmly committed to the current program. We think there are things to be learned from both perspectives; our common goal is children learning mathematics. Standards-based math develops both conceptual and procedural knowledge through research-based strategies that are appropriate to the age of students.

One of the issues we want to clarify is how Alpine School District came to adopt standards-based math. In 1997, math scores continued to be lower than district demographics would predict. Two committees were organized--one consisting of K-12 teachers, the other consisting of administrators and parents. Each was given the charge to evaluate current instructional materials and student performance, as well as to research successful math programs throughout the United States and international communities. They were to make recommendations to the Instructional Services Department. After three years, both committees recommended a standards-based approach to math instruction.

In 2000-2001, three standards-based programs were piloted. At the conclusion of that year the programs were evaluated. *Investigations in Numbers, Data, and Space (K-5)* and *Connected Math (6-8)* were the most comprehensive, provided the most support for students and teachers, and aligned most closely with the state core. (Since that time a comprehensive alignment has been completed. Gaps discovered during the alignment process have been filled with appropriate materials to cover all aspects of the State core.) During the same year, teachers and administrators were invited to attend a meeting to introduce standards-based math philosophy. Three additional follow-up sessions were held to provide more information. Each elementary school was given the opportunity to implement *Investigations*. As of November, 2002, 29 of our 40 elementary schools have chosen to be a part of the *Investigations* program.

Although some parents disagree, the Board of Education believes these programs teach basic number facts. As a district we also had planned to adjust and modify our practice to address our concerns about fluency and efficiency. Homework will include some computational practice, an explanation of vocabulary used in standards based math, clarification of directions, and an explanation of how the homework relates to the math concept being taught. We will also provide classroom practice of basic math facts as appropriate. These changes will be introduced as new units are taught.

The Board is listening to the voices of our patrons and making suitable adjustments which support student's learning mathematics. Because we believe standards-based math is the most comprehensive approach to mathematical understanding, the Board of Education remains committed to the standards-based program.