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Mill Valley Brings the Gift of Math

The California Department of Education reported earlier this week that the revision process for the Mathematics Framework for California Public Schools: K-12 is well underway, and will be presented to the State Board of Education, with action expected on July 13-14th, 2022. The framework is important guidance designed to help educators align classroom teaching with California's rigorous math learning standards. Mill Valley School District staff and administrators are looking forward to seeing the forthcoming changes and are considering ways to implement them in our classrooms here locally.

In preparation for the new framework, Mill Valley has formed an elementary level Math Committee this year, under the direction of Laura Myers, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, and with guidance from current K-5 MVSD Math Consultant, Leo Kostelnik, who was the former Edna Maguire principal. The committee is developing a shared philosophy and approach to teaching mathematics that includes igniting a sense of excitement, joy, and confidence about math in our students. The committee is also exploring strategies to ensure Mill Valley students can demonstrate deep understanding of math concepts, reasoning abilities, and flexible application of these learned concepts and skills.



In line with these strategies, elementary teachers are participating in professional development programs from local math education specialists, Jo Boaler and Marilyn Burns.

This week, a group of Mill Valley elementary educators attended Boaler's workshop at Stanford entitled, "Engaging All Students through Open, In-Depth and Connected Content." Additionally, second grade classes across the district are piloting Marilyn Burns' new math assessment "Listening to Learn." Teachers participating in the pilot can work with Burns in person to analyze data, refine teaching strategies, and simply talk math.



Middle school staff are also working with these targeted approaches in their classrooms, and recently attended an inspiring math workshop at the Marin County Office of Education led by Fawn Nguyen. Highlighted in this workshop was the idea of teachers offering math as a "gift" to students, using fewer procedural problems, and more problem-solving activities. Students can be more successful solving novel problems, regardless of how far they get in the curriculum, when they practice critical thinking skills.

"We are exploring innovative ways to promote inspiring education to our Mill Valley students through staff development, support, and learning from each other," stated Laura Myers.