

MEMO

TO: MEMBERS OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE

FROM: LYNN HANDBERG, 763-550-0775, Parent in Wayzata School District

DATE: 1-24-05

IN RE: Math standards

I would like to briefly relate my family's experience with Wayzata district's integrated math curriculum now being taught compared to the traditional math curriculum formerly taught.

2001 graduate. My oldest daughter was in Wayzata district from 2nd to 12th grade. Had traditional math K through 12th grade. Went through algebra, geometry, algebra II, trigonometry, precalculus and calculus with A's and B's. Was considering an engineering major but decided on performing arts degree instead. I'm 100 % sure she would have done well in any college curriculum taking math classes. Had a great math experience in a traditional math setting..

2003 graduate. My second daughter was in Wayzata district K through 12th grade. Traditional math through 3rd grade, did Chicago math, 4th and 5th, traditional in 6th, back to integrated 7th and 8th. Had integrated math program 9th through 11th grade. B student. During her sophomore year in college (fall of 2004) she took two weeks of algebra, did not understand it, talked to the head of the math dept. to see if she could switch out of the class. After talking with the professor, he told her that he understood why she wasn't understanding beginning college algebra, and that the reason in his opinion was because she wasn't taught the enough algebraic concepts during high school math to understand college algebra. He allowed her to switch to a lower level math class. I also talked to the professor personally to verify what she told me he said – he confirmed what he had told her, and also that there are good things about integrated math, but to be sure to include in the curriculum the needed requirements for algebra, geometry, etc. I was shocked to find out that she couldn't take a beginning college-level algebra class and do well in it.

Another '03 graduate from Wayzata High School. This student had three years of integrated math, B student. At U of Iowa tried to take a math class called technology in society, which was chemistry-based equations, but had to drop it. This student felt she was not prepared to take this freshman level math. This should have been an easy class, but the student had to drop the class. This year the student transferred to U of M, is now taking philosophy of math – supposed to be the least challenging math class available – reasoning, no algebra, how math came to be, not equation-based, but is still very nervous about taking this math class at the U. This student is not happy with the math education she received in high school.

I would ask that the Committee align new state assessments in math with the new math standards. Thank you very much.