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**Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. Presents Comparison
of District's Elementary Math Programs**

PITTSBURGH December 11, 2007 – At tonight's Education Committee Meeting, Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. presented highlights of its comparison of the District's elementary math programs, Everyday Math and Harcourt Math. Mathematica provides objective research to support decisions that affect the well-being of Americans. At the request of Superintendent Mark Roosevelt, Mathematica provided an external evaluation of both of the District's core math programs in order to help determine a single district-wide instructional program. The full technical report by Mathematica of the District's core math programs will be available at the end of the month.

"Over the last few years we have seen an increase in our math scores," said Superintendent Roosevelt. "In order to ensure these gains continue we need to closely examine what programs best serve our elementary students and prepares them for higher level math programs, such as Algebra."

In November 2005, The Council of the Great City Schools, a Washington, D.C.-based education consortium representing 66 urban school systems, including Pittsburgh, visited the District to assess its curriculum. The Council, in January 2006 described the instructional program in the Pittsburgh Public Schools as "fractured and poorly articulated" and recommended the use of a single district-wide instructional program. In fall 2006, the District introduced Macmillan/McGraw-Hill *Treasures*, a comprehensive reading program for elementary students in grades Pre-K through 5.

District's Current Elementary Math Programs

Everyday Math

Everyday Math is a research-based curriculum developed by the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project that has been in use at District elementary schools since the 1990s. According to the US Department of Education's "What Works" Clearinghouse, Everyday Math is the only elementary math program showing "potentially positive" effects on student achievement. The program builds students skills through exposure to math concepts over time and uses games and routines to hone skills.

Everyday Math is currently used in New York City Schools and Norfolk, Virginia. The Philadelphia School District has seen large achievement gains since its adoption of the Everyday Math program in 2002.

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Harcourt Math

In fall 2005, the District began its pilot of the Harcourt Math program at eight elementary schools: Pittsburgh Morrow PreK-5, Pittsburgh Roosevelt PreK-5, Pittsburgh West Liberty K-5, Pittsburgh Northview PreK-5, Pittsburgh Faison PreK-8, Pittsburgh Manchester PreK-8 and Pittsburgh Sunnyside K-8.

Harcourt Math uses problem solving, skill building, and conceptual development exercises that allow each student to visualize and establish connections from one lesson to the next. Worksheets and a computer program assist students in gaining mastery of concepts and skills.

Currently, Garden Grove Unified School District in California uses the Harcourt Math program. In 2004, Garden Grove received the Broad Prize for Urban Education.

Mathematica Findings

The Mathematica analysis set out to answer the following questions regarding student achievement;

- Which program shows greater average achievement gains?
- Which program shows greater gains for District subgroups (low-income, African - American, low achieving, high achieving)?
- Is there any evidence of harm to students who change programs as a result of mobility?

In order to reach its conclusions, Mathematica completed a comparison of two years of achievement gains among students in grades 3-5, one group of students using Everyday Math and the other using the Harcourt Math program. Mathematica then examined the data per District subgroup. Additionally, Mathematica conducted random interviews with math teachers of students in grades 1, 3 and 5 as well as curriculum coaches at four schools using Everyday Math and four schools using Harcourt Math.

Mathematica found that "achievement trajectories for students using Harcourt Math and those using Everyday Math are virtually indistinguishable." Everyday Math and Harcourt Math show no achievement differences overall or for District subgroups. In its comparison of students who changed schools and math programs with those who changed schools and kept the same math program, Mathematica found that achievement growth for mobile students who switched math programs was not significantly different from mobile students who did not.

Mathematica was unable to test the long-term effects of each program since the Harcourt Math pilot began in the District just two years ago. Although District staff rated Everyday Math higher in its ability to develop mathematical knowledge and meet the needs of all students, the Harcourt Math program rated higher in usability. In its interviews with Pittsburgh Public Schools teachers, Mathematica found that teachers of both programs felt the need to supplement the programs.

District Recommendation

Tonight the District recommended the formation of a committee to review the District's current math programs in order to make recommendations regarding the continuation of one or both of the programs or the adoption of a new program. The committee will be charged with the review and selection of supplemental materials necessary to support programs.

The public can obtain a copy of this evening's Education Committee presentations by visiting the Pittsburgh Public Schools website at <http://www.pps.k12.pa.us>, the Division of Communications and Marketing, Room 204 or by calling the Parent Hotline at (412) 622-7920. Public feedback can be provided to the Superintendent via email to superintendentoffice@pghboe.net or via mail.

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