The North Penn School District is a large suburban district located approximately 20 miles north of Philadelphia. Seven municipalities are served by the district, which creates an economically and socially diverse population of 13,500 students in Grades K–12. The district operates 13 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, and 1 senior high school.

Training in NCTM Standards

The North Penn School District has a process of regular review for all curriculum materials, and in the 1999–2000 school year, mathematics was up for review. In the time since the district had last adopted a mathematics textbook in the early 1990s, the standards promoted by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) had been widely disseminated, and were of great interest to mathematics educators.

The curriculum review committee began its work by researching the NCTM standards that emphasize problem solving, hands-on activities, and real-world applications in a student-driven curriculum. In addition, the NCTM standards call for more mathematical content in the elementary grades, such as geometry, algebra, and probability.

The North Penn School District was already using a standards-based science program through the partnership of the Merck Institute for Science Education. In preparation for moving to a standards-based mathematics program, the educational institute supported district professional development training on the principles of teaching mathematics following an NCTM standards-based curriculum.

“Having a good understanding of the goals of the NCTM standards was very helpful when we later adopted Everyday Mathematics,” states Caroline Gibson Crew, the district's elementary math and science coordinator. “In addition, our experience with a standards-based science program made it easier to transition to math instruction using a similar pedagogy.”

Developing Teacher Leaders

During the 2000–2001 school year, the district piloted Everyday Mathematics in a total of 82 classrooms. In Crew's opinion, it was important that every elementary building participate in the pilot because pilot teachers would be called upon later, during the full implementation of the program, to serve as guides and trainers for their fellow teachers.

“We reaped many benefits from the Everyday Mathematics pilot,” recalls Crew. “The first was an indication of what teachers could expect during the full implementation. Switching from a basal series to a standards-based program represents a big change for the teacher. Teachers who were not involved with the pilot watched their colleagues work
through this change during the pilot year, but they also heard about the good things coming from it. *Everyday Mathematics* was working for the children.”

After the one-year pilot of standards-based *Everyday Mathematics*, a comprehensive evaluation of the programs piloted was conducted along with a parent survey. The analysis of this data led to a unanimous recommendation from the district math committee. Thus, the decision was made to fully implement *Everyday Mathematics* in Grades K–6 in all 13 elementary buildings, involving 330 regular and special education classrooms.

**Staff Development**

The summer before the full implementation of *Everyday Mathematics*, all teachers in the district received three full days of professional development training. The teachers who had piloted the program led two of these all-day training sessions, proving to be sources of support and confidence to their colleagues.

Once school started, the pilot teachers helped to facilitate communication about *Everyday Mathematics* in their buildings by being available to answer teachers’ questions and to offer their own experiences as examples. The pilot teachers/trainers were also able to enhance communications with parents, as they had more experience working with the program.

Throughout the year, additional grade-level staff development meetings, led by the teacher trainers, were scheduled after school to further training with *Everyday Mathematics*. Using this model, most of the 48 Grade 3 teachers in the district, for example, came together in a 1 1/2-hour meeting to discuss their experiences in teaching the program. Additional meetings are scheduled to address special education needs. The work of these district trainers was instrumental in the success of the implementation. They helped support the work of classroom teachers through the sharing of ideas, clarifying specific points of the program, and providing informal coaching.

Now in the second year of full implementation, Crew states, “All of our staff deserve a big hand for working so hard to implement *Everyday Mathematics* in the North Penn School District! Students and teachers are working through the program more enthusiastically this year as a result of the efforts of teachers, principals, and math support staff. We only expect more success.”

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**Meeting All Expectations**

For additional information on SRA/McGraw-Hill’s *Everyday Mathematics* program, please contact us toll-free at 1-888-SRA-4543 and visit our Web site at www.sra4kids.com.