



Fall River Public Schools

For immediate release
Tuesday, December 14, 2010

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NEWS RELEASE

Fall River educators present at statewide Curriculum Summit on innovations in math instruction

*Based on MCAS math gains, State officials invited Fall River
to share its approach to teaching fractions*

FALL RIVER, MA – Fall River’s innovative approach to teaching mathematics to students in grades five through seven has been cited as a model for educators in other districts across the Commonwealth.

Last week, educators from the Fall River Public Schools presented two workshops on the topic at the 3rd Annual Summit on Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment in Marlborough, MA. Officials from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, which hosts the summit, invited Fall River to participate after reviewing student academic growth data and meeting with school personnel to understand the district’s approach. On the Grade 7 MCAS Math test alone, the percentage of Fall River students scoring at the two highest levels – Proficient and Advanced – has increased by more than half in just two years, from 23% in 2008 to 35% this year.

Nancy Magoni, a fifth grade math coach, and Jill Rivers, a sixth grade math teacher at Talbot Middle School, presented *Fractions: Exploring a Common Core Math Learning Progression* at the summit. They described Fall River’s district-wide use of “Context for Learning” materials, developed by researcher Dr. Catherine Fosnot from Mathematics in the City along with colleagues from the Netherlands-based Freudenthal Institute. The program is designed to deepen students’ conceptual understanding of mathematics. Ms. Rivers, who taught at the Silvia Elementary School last year, highlighted its particular effectiveness in teaching English Language Learners and students with disabilities.

Superintendent Meg Mayo-Brown said, "Teachers, administrators and math coaches throughout the Fall River Public Schools have worked tirelessly to bring this innovative approach to students in our classrooms. We are proud of the gains we're making in mathematics, and we applaud these two educators for sharing their knowledge and experience with colleagues from around the state."

As a result of the presentations, teachers from other Massachusetts school districts have asked to visit math classes in Fall River to observe teachers and students using the approach.

The district is in the second year of full implementation of the program, now in kindergarten through grade 7.

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