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ALFRED B. FANTINI
CAROLINE HUNTER
JOSÉ LUIS ROJAS
DAVID J. WEINSTEIN
AYESHA M. WILSON

--IN SCHOOL COMMITTEE--

August 8, 2023

ORDERED:

That the following be referred back to the Superintendent:

WHEREAS: the challenges of how Algebra 1 is being taught in the US, with more students now taking AP Calculus in high school than students taking Calculus in college, but more students now taking remedial Algebra 1 in college than taking Algebra 1 in high school; and

WHEREAS: That we should spend more time going deeply into the most important mathematics, which comes earlier not later in secondary school; and

WHEREAS: That moving to heterogeneous math classes in middle school initially increased the number of students placed in geometry instead of algebra 1 in 9th grade in high school; and

WHEREAS: That the need to truncate content in all subjects during the height of the pandemic reversed that trend; and

WHEREAS: That new mathematics standard implemented in 2010 shifted content previously taught in high school to 8th grade, making middle school mathematics less repetitive and more demanding and exciting; and

WHEREAS: That we want students to be challenged in every subject and every grade level; and

WHEREAS: There is more than one option to compress mathematics courses, from the Common Core approach of compressing 7, 8 and 9-grade mathematics into the two years of 7th and 8th grades, to compressing Algebra 2 and Pre-Calculus in high school, to provide an optional year-long course like CAM in 8th grade that covers Algebra 1 outside of school hours in parallel with the 8th-grade mathematics course; and

WHEREAS: Different approaches to compressing mathematics courses all allow students the option to take more advanced mathematics in high school, but each of them involves considerable tradeoffs that will affect students' ability to take advantage of their knowledge of mathematics after high school; and

WHEREAS: This motion does not interfere with the district's ongoing revisions of how we teach mathematics in CPSD, as that is an operational decision that does not involve School Committee policy-making; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That School Committee hold a roundtable discussion with community partners focused on mathematics, like the Algebra Project, Math Talk, Math Circle, Illustrative Math, the Young People's Project, the Calculus Project, and Cambridge STEAM Initiative, and with CPSD mathematics teachers in primary and secondary schools,

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and middle school principals, on the cost vs. benefit analysis to the students of the different approaches to compressing mathematics in middle school and high school; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the School Committee use the discussion from that roundtable, along with other information, to make decisions on how it might want to change current policies that affect the teaching of mathematics to better challenge all students across all grades.

A true copy:

Attest: 
Ariel B. Kennebrew
Executive Secretary to the Cambridge School Committee

Motion #23-199

cc:
Member Rojas
Member Wilson
Member Hunter
Member Fantini
Vice Chair Rachel
Mayor Siddiqui
Member Weinstein
Superintendent