AUSTIN Independent School District | Office of the Superintendent

GPM 4.1 Executive Summary

Goal Progress Measure 4.1 is around accelerated mathematics for 6th grade students identified as economically disadvantaged.

In Austin ISD, we believe that math instruction should be engaging, relevant and student-centered. Because students learn better when empowered to explore concepts together, we place a strong emphasis on fostering a culture of student discourse. Students are encouraged to express and share their thinking, which helps them both develop and demonstrate their mathematical understanding.

We are committed to the belief that all students can engage in rigorous mathematics curriculum and develop strong mathematical reasoning. This is the reason why our accelerated math pathways are not cemented for any of our students. It used to be that students were "tracked", meaning students did not have an opportunity to change pathways. But our math pathways are now built to have multiple entry points and opportunities for students and caregivers to choose the path that is right for them. Whatever pathway our students choose, our commitment is to provide a high-quality rigorous curriculum that sets our students up for college, career, and life success.

GPM 4.1 reads, "The percentage of 6th-grade students identified as economically disadvantaged who enroll in accelerated mathematics and persist to course completion will increase from 21% in June 2024 to 39% by June 2029." There is not an "On Track" methodology recommended by the administration or approved by the board; this will be part of our work as we refine our board monitoring reports. However, the data this year is showing increasing trends, which is encouraging. This is especially true of the following student groups: African American, Two or More, White students and students receiving special education. To sustain this growth, we know we need to increase alignment with math pathways starting in elementary grades. The better we are aligned from elementary numeracy to middle school accelerated math, the better our students enter high school prepared for higher level math courses.

While parts of the data are encouraging, the data also shows that there is a lot of work to do to close the gaps around enrollment in accelerated math courses for all of our student groups,

particularly our economically disadvantaged students. Currently, 25% of our economically disadvantaged 6th grade students are enrolled in the 6th grade accelerated math course, and around 30% are enrolled in some form of accelerated math course. It is important to note that this is not just an area of improvement for Austin ISD. This is evidenced in the statewide 8th grade Algebra 1 enrollment data: Throughout Texas, 18% of students from low-income households are enrolled in Algebra 1 by the end of 8th grade, compared to 40% of their non-low-income peers.

Access is a barrier we are working really hard to overcome in Austin ISD. Recently, we joined the E3 Pathways of Promise 4.0 Initiative, the goal of which is to ensure equitable instruction and access to advanced math courses. Research that was shared during this collaboration shows that students who do not earn a postsecondary credential within six years of leaving high school have just a 12% chance of securing a living wage job. Research also showed that the more advanced math classes students take in high school, the more likely they are to earn a postsecondary credential within six years. This means that our goal in offering accelerated math pathways starting in the 6th grade has implications for our students securing a living wage job in the future.

Our root cause analysis identified 4 barriers: 1) inconsistent implementation of accelerated math pathways, 2) lack of clear communication and guidance around accelerated math pathways, 3) insufficient professional learning for accelerated math teachers, and 4) varying instructional minutes from campus to campus.

Analysis of each of these barriers led us to the following key strategies that will support this work. 1) We need to create consistency around implementing the accelerated math pathways program. We need to continue to review campus practices and ensure all students have access to the pathway that is right for them. 2) We need to provide clear guidance and training for principals, counselors and teachers. We also need to provide caregivers many opportunities to learn about the math pathways we offer in Austin ISD. 3) We need to augment our professional learning for accelerated math teachers. They are tasked with teaching students multiple years of TEKS in a short time while scaffolding well to provide students with the support they need. They need ample professional learning around this. 4) We need to explore how accelerated math courses can be integrated differently into a master schedule. We know it is better when students engage in math every day.

Outlier campuses that are leading the way in this goal progress measure include Mathews ES, Lively MS, Ann Richards SYWL, Lamar, Sadler Means YWLA, and Garcia YMLA. In addition, Ortega ES, Rodriguez ES, Allison ES and Sanchez ES should be highlighted for their dedication to

offering accelerated math to their 6th graders. The characteristics of our exemplary outlier schools include:

- Commitment to the accelerated math program
- Leaders who routinely collaborate with various departments, including the multilingual education team, special education team, academics, etc. to address challenges
- Campus culture that demonstrates a mathematical mindset that supports student success

At these campuses, you will not see rote memorization or students just following some algorithm. They are taught to think flexibly and critically, and students are challenged to choose the strategy around the problem solving process. In their math classrooms, you will often hear a phrase that we borrowed from Pam Harris' work - "Math is FigureOutAble!"

Through our presentation today, we will be providing our starting data points and initial progress. We will also explore how accelerated math pathways are designed to support students' academic growth and foster a lifelong appreciation for mathematics.