



ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA

CATHOLIC SCHOOL

January 3, 2017

Dear Parents,

In early December, I met with two faculty members of the Kennesaw Mountain Magnet program at the Kennesaw Mountain High School. I visited with Cheryl Cannon, a math teacher in the Magnet Program, and Dr. Kelly Ingle, the Program Coordinator, Academy of Mathematics, Science, and Technology.

The purpose of the meeting was to inquire the level of preparedness of our graduates for the Math and Science Magnet Program. We want to ensure that our students are well-qualified for this rigorous program and address any weaknesses in our classes if necessary.

The meeting was very informative. First of all, I think it is important to share with you that Dr. Ingle and Mrs. Cannon were grateful that we requested to meet with them to discuss our Math curriculum and program. They told me that this was the first time they had met with a member of a private school to discuss curriculum and instruction.

I was able to share our Algebra curriculum and program with Dr. Ingle and Mrs. Cannon. Put simply, they were impressed with our Algebra curriculum, describing it as a "traditional" algebra curriculum that is very close to that of the Cobb County middle schools. One particular strength in our curriculum is the inclusion of Quadratics - this topic of study has been in place in our curriculum for some time while the Cobb County public schools have just made the decision to place Quadratics back to the 8th grade to better prepare their students for advanced math courses.

When asked about what St. Catherine's can do better to prepare our students for the Math and Science Magnet Program, Dr. Ingle and Mrs. Cannon made the following recommendations:

1. **Improve critical-thinking skills for understanding mathematical language for solving word problems.** One way to do so is to give students more opportunities and support for solving word problems. Our curriculum for algebra includes a standard that addresses word problems: "Translate algebraic expressions and equations into words." Mrs. Cannon indicated that students in many middle schools tend not to get enough practice in word problems after 5th grade.
2. **Stress the importance of effort to our students.** Dr. Ingle and Mrs. Cannon indicate that 50% of our graduates are excelling in the Math and Science Magnet Program, while the other 50% are doing well but have room for improvement. They believe that the students who are not reaching their full potential can improve by putting forth greater and more consistent effort. It appears that about half of the students in the Magnet Program - from all feeder schools and not just St.

Catherine's - begin their freshman year with the misconception that, since they have earned a place in the program, they should be able to succeed in the program with minimal efforts.

This meeting has assured me that our Math program is preparing our students well for the Math and Science Magnet Program at Kennesaw Mountain High School. We will continue to "check in" with the faculty of this program from time to time to ensure our students are well-qualified for and able to succeed in this program.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,
Stacy Glavin
Assistant Principal
Saint Catherine of Siena Catholic School