



Norfolk Public Schools January 26, 2009
NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED. GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE.

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to recommend the services of Math Solutions, as our experiences with this company have been outstanding and professional. We have worked with Math Solutions over the past eight years, with measurable overall results. Our overall goal was to make systemic and long-lasting changes in the teaching and learning of mathematics within our district, especially in Kindergarten through grade eight. We achieved this goal in part through our partnership with Math Solutions with ongoing professional development support through courses and all-day sessions, Math Solutions publications, on-site coaching, and classroom demonstrations for teachers. In addition, we also saw a dramatic improvement in test scores (i.e., there was a jump from 30% to 75% in Grade five over a five year period

We chose to work with Math Solutions on our *Math Initiative* because they are known for helping teachers make mathematics engaging and exciting for students. They connect math to real-life experiences through the use of manipulatives, classroom discussions, and writing assignments. Math Solutions provides teachers with new ways to differentiate their methods and lessons while providing teachers with a vision of how to structure a unique and differentiated math program.). I was also looking for a professional development partnership that would be attentive to the needs of our school district rather than merely one that serves as a commercial product. A critical aspect of our partnership has been the responsiveness of the company to our needs; Math Solutions has customized professional development based upon discussions with my staff and with teams of teachers. Math Solutions is definitely not a "canned" professional development program.

Our partnership began with one summer five-day course (*About Teaching Mathematics, An Introduction*), followed by two all-day sessions during the school year to reinforce two specific concepts: number sense and place value. Our teachers were led through a simulated classroom experience where they solved the same problems they would be giving to students. They learned how to listen to student input, how to facilitate dialogue, and how to encourage classroom collaboration. In addition, combining the courses and series with the corresponding publications has provided powerful and sustaining results.

The second year included another five-day course (*About Teaching Mathematics, Advanced Level*) and several all-day follow-up sessions on topics such as writing in math class; using manipulatives; and teaching place value, multiplication, and fractions. Additional professional development included a customized series of standards-based teacher leadership sessions that allowed us to provide a way to reinforce and sustain all that we've learned. We developed a team of core leaders who could provide specialized and ongoing support during the school year to teachers working in low-performing schools. This enabled teachers to return to their classrooms and immediately implement what they've learned. When they attended the next session, they discussed the experience and shared insights with their colleagues.

All in all, Math Solutions has provided us with the tools to revolutionize the way we teach math. I would be delighted to discuss our experiences with Math Solutions further and answer any questions you may have. I have included my contact information below.

Sincerely,

Denise Walston

Senior Coordinator - Mathematics

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