



# Fox Chapel Area SCHOOL DISTRICT

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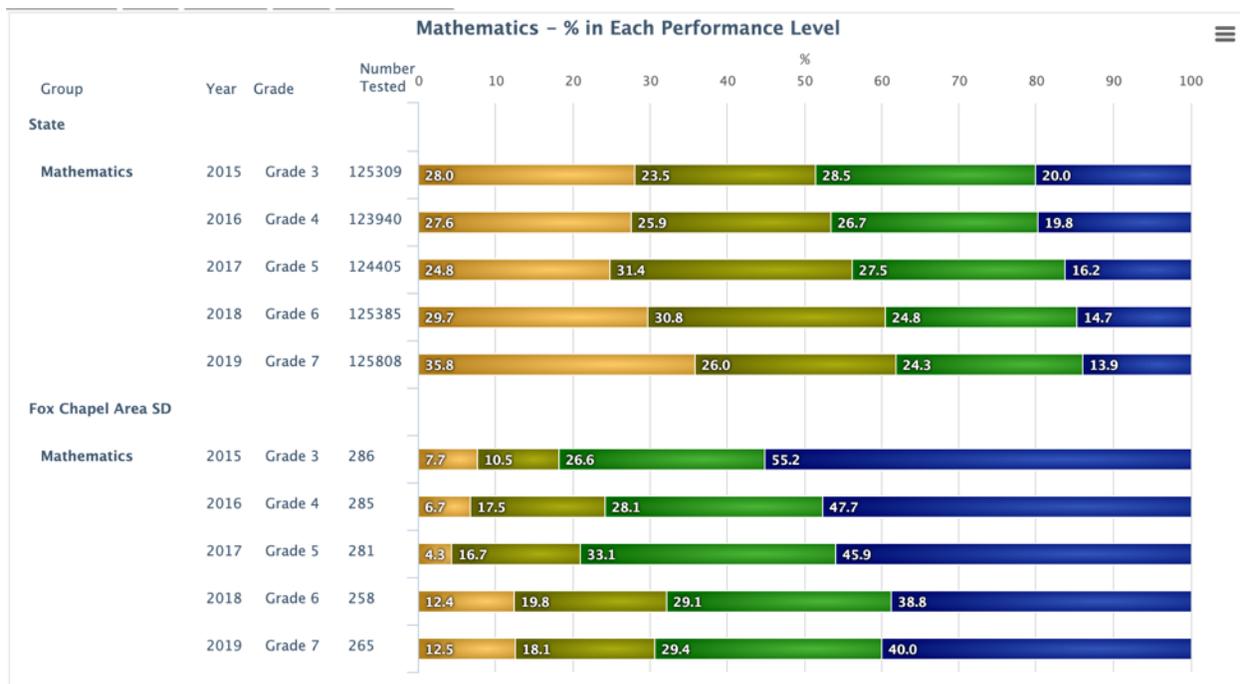
December 6, 2019

Mr. Greg Dolan

Dear Mr. Dolan,

The data that you referenced at the December 3, 2019, School Board Meeting has been an ongoing concern, and while we have made gains in student achievement in math over the past five years, we believe there is room to grow. It is something we are addressing as part of the district's Comprehensive Plan goals that speak to fostering academic growth and ensuring the needs of each student are supported through intervention and enrichment.

We are not alone in this challenge. The pattern you identified occurs across the state and with local school districts like ours. In the chart below, you can see the cohort comparison of current 8<sup>th</sup> graders from Fox Chapel compared to all others across the state. In PA, 38.2% of current 8<sup>th</sup> graders were able to pass the PSSA last year compared to 69.4% in Fox Chapel. There is a steady decline in this cohort group across the state.



We don't consider the information above a justification of our own local progress, but wanted to provide context to patterns observed across the region and state. While our results are and should be much better than the state average, we are not satisfied that a portion of our middle school students are currently not demonstrating grade level skills on the state assessment.

To address this challenge, the district has made significant changes to the middle school schedule, which allows for the following:

- Extended time in mathematics
- Revised intervention process in mathematics to include consistent, researched-based resources
- Increased time for problem solving, application, and mathematical discourse
- Provided additional math extension opportunities during homebase times on a rotating schedule
- Specific/targeted students and classes to receive additional support during their math class via a support teacher

We anticipate that these adjustments will provide opportunities for more targeted remediation, will help students master grade level skills, and close achievement gaps for historically underperforming groups. Simultaneously, we maintain a variety of math enrichment courses for students who have demonstrated mastery of grade level skills such as pre-algebra, algebra, and geometry.

In addition, we continue to analyze and adapt our elementary programming to catch deficiencies in learning early and provide interventions to help students as they progress towards the middle school. Some examples of this include a great focus on mathematical fluency, academic standards analysis and planning, and a greater focus on the reading elements associated with mathematical requirements for students.

Finally, we continue to provide collaborative work sessions and trainings for teachers to ensure understanding of mathematical concepts and applications.

Sincerely,



Gene Freeman, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

cc: School Board