



China Elementary School

605 Henderson Avenue / P. O. Box 398
China, Texas 77613
(409) 981-6410

Sandra Sherman, Principal

Dianne Timberlake, Asst. Principal

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China Elementary Parents:

The purpose of this letter is to share information about your child's math instruction and to provide resources to help you understand the changes Texas Education Agency has made to our math objectives, commonly referred to as the TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills). In 2006, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics published a document titled *Curriculum Focal Points for Kindergarten through Grade 8 Mathematics: A Quest for Coherence*. This document outlines focal points for grades K-8 mathematics increasing instructional rigor in an effort to have students "algebra-ready" by ninth grade.

In response to the above panel's research, the Texas Education Agency published *Texas Response to Curriculum Focal Points for K-8 Mathematics (2009)*, initiating a several year revision of Texas math TEKS. This document was published to provide a guide for schools in how to transition from the old TEKS to the new. It addresses which areas we should prioritize and emphasize, how to pace instruction, and outlines the professional development needed to do so successfully.

What does this mean to your child? We have been transitioning from the old TEKS to the new TEKS for two years. Only the old math TEKS were taught in 12-13; a combination of old and new were taught in 13-14, and only new TEKS are being taught in the current school year. In practical terms, it means that a number of math TEKS have moved down one or two grade levels from where they were previously taught and will no longer be taught at the upper grade where they were once taught. Obviously, this creates a few gaps. For example, a fifth grade teacher may have to reach down and teach her students a concept that will now be taught in third grade (but wasn't yet in the curriculum when those students were in third grade). This is true for third and fourth grades as well. This year will be a year of catching up and filling in the gaps. For that reason, the teachers will be covering more material in a shorter amount of time. Student attendance and attention to task will be more important than ever before. This is especially true because the spring 2015 STAAR math assessment at grades 3-5 will test the new math TEKS.

In every grade level, our math teachers will continue to receive professional development. To aid in this transition, our district has provided a district math coordinator who will work with all grade levels on all four campuses. Some parents may see an increase in student frustration and occasional difficulty with the rigor of the new TEKS for the grade. You may find that your student's benchmark scores are lower, and grades on unit tests may be a little lower. We will do our best to provide tutorials and assistance to meet the needs of each child. If you would like to examine the changes more closely, you can find information at the following website, <http://tinyurl.com/q4egtzl>. These documents provide a side by side comparison of how the math TEKS changed at each grade level. Find your child's grade level, and click on the document. As always, please know that we are available to answer your questions.

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