

TO: Dr. Ushma Shah, Superintendent

FROM: Emilie Creehan, Director of Universal Design for Learning

SUBJECT: Summer Program: Access to Algebra

DATE: November 8, 2024

Purpose:

The purpose of this memo is to share our proposed plan for redesigning the program historically called “Math Enrichment - Bridge” and renaming it “Access to Algebra.”

Additionally, as outlined below, we request budget approval to continue the program in Summer 2025 before moving the program entirely out of the summer by SY26/Summer 2026.

Background and Context:

This program is one among other key math initiatives at D97 (see table below). Historically, the program has been bundled with summer programs and marketed under “Math Enrichment.” The below table delineates this program among other key math initiatives at the district to provide clarity to the reader.

	Acceleration	Access to Algebra (formerly “Math Enrichment - Bridge”)	Math Review (formerly “Math Enrichment - Review”)
Driver	State-Mandated	D97 Equity Policy	D97 Equity Policy
Purpose	To accelerate passed your age appropriate grade level in any subject per 2019 Illinois Accelerated Placement Act	Provide students with access to Algebra before high school especially for students of color and female students in alignment with the D97 Equity Policy	To provide students with a review of math standards that they learned throughout the current school year.
Who can participate	This pathway is open to all students in the district	All 5th -7th grades that are not already accelerated in mathematics	All 5th - 7th grade students
How can students participate	Students, teachers, or families can apply for acceleration during the Window (March 1 - April 25)	Students can enroll in either or both of the pathways: Bridge course or MAP	Students sign up when summer programming is announced

According to the 2024 Illinois State Report card, the percentage of Black, low income, and female 8th graders taking and passing Algebra I at D97 has increased between 2023 and 2024. As articulated in our 2024 Summer Program Evaluation, increasing the percentage of students of color and female students taking and passing Algebra by eighth grade is the long-term outcome of the program. Thus, this finding suggests that the program is having its intended effect.

However, data from summer 2024 indicate that Black, Hispanic, Female and low income students enrolled in Bridge at statistically significant lower levels than their peers. This suggests the need to ensure that our recruitment efforts are targeting students who can benefit from the program.

And, while pass rates via Bridge or MAP were high (at least 70%) overall and for every measured demographic group, non White students had a statistically lower pass rate than their White peers. Indeed, other data revealed that while families and teachers generally agreed that the program provides sufficient support in key areas, some respondents expressed need for significant changes to the program, including lengthening the program, improving the quality of instruction, and better communication with families about the program and other options.

Summer 2025 Budget Request:

We are requesting \$22,597 to operate this program. Note that a portion of these funds will be used to compensate a Coordinator for work to be completed in part during Trimester 3.

Description of Activity or Services	SY24 Number of Teachers or Employees	SY24 Recommended Stipend or Amount	SY25 Number of Teachers or Employees	SY25 2% increase	SY25 Recommended Stipend or Amount	Total Funds
Teacher Stipends (Summer Learning: Access to Algebra)	5	\$2,911.00	5	\$58.22	\$2,969.22	\$14,846.10
Incentive for Current MS Math Teacher	5	–	5	–	\$500.00	\$2,500.00
Coordinator (Trimester 3 and Summer Learning: Access to Algebra)	1	\$4,168.00	1	\$83.36	\$5,251.36	\$5,251.36

	\$22,597.46
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Proposed Program Design Changes:

In response to data collected as part of 2024 Summer Program Evaluation and other feedback, we identified 3 main takeaway action items:

1. We need to revise the program to enhance access to the program.

Our proposed changes include transforming the Bridge program schedule as follows:

- Starting in school year 25, we propose moving the 5th grade trimester 3 course to during the day and maintaining the summer program portion. By school year 26, we propose moving the course out of the summer and instead offering the course to 5th-7th graders during the day throughout trimesters 2 and 3.
 - Schools will have autonomy to determine which staff member teaches the trimester 2 and 3 course and the time of day for the course, but staff will be required to be CMP3 trained. Additional requirements include students receiving 150 minutes a week, standardized progress reports, use of a specified scope and sequence to ensure that the selected standards are taught.
- These changes will carry these additional benefits:
 - Aligns 5th, 6th, and 7th Grade program schedules
 - Does not interfere with after-school extra-curricular and summer activities
 - Provides consistency with staffing
 - Eliminates program transportation costs
 - Decreases costs overall
 - Ensures IEP Accommodations and 504 Plans can be maximally supported
- Additionally, we identified the need to target our recruitment strategies to ensure we are recruiting students of color and female students for whom the program was intended. Specifically, we will work to ensure that:
 - Under-represented groups will receive direct invitations after Benchmark meetings
 - Teachers will communicate during Family- Teacher Conferences
 - PTOs will be enlisted to help disseminate program information

2. We need to modify the program to enhance the quality.

There are two main modifications we will make to the program:

- We propose to remove the independent student option.
 - This option was not popular, and our evaluation shows that students did not often pass the exam.
 - Any student regardless of course enrollment will still be permitted to sit the end-of-course exam.
- Additionally, the team will continue to improve the appeals process. This appeals rubric was designed last summer and aligned with the acceleration rubric. The data showed that it did not increase our pass rate for students of color. With that data and a feedback survey, we will work with our math department to continue to reflect on the process and rubric.

3. We need to increase understanding and transparency

We have identified the following actions steps:

- Train school staff and administration in understanding program options
- Establish Multiple avenues of communication (PTO, Teachers, District, Principals)
- More updated website with all relevant information
- Language is clear (acceleration v enrichment)
- Standardize progress reports
- Clear and consistent timeline

Timeline for Roll-Out:

These proposed program changes have been reviewed and vetted by several stakeholder groups. Between September through November 2024, the Bridge team, Math Department chairs, District Administrators, Union Presidents, Principals, Enrichment Specialists, and the Superintendent reviewed the plan and provided feedback.

Below is our intended timeline for implementing these design changes:

October - November:

- Communicate changes to all impacted staff (OPTA presidents, principals, Enrichment Specialists, Math Department chairs, 5th grade teachers)
- Present new plan to the board
- Create and Share PD/training plan with impacted staff

November-December:

- Communicate schedule changes with families Update
- Website and begin advertising about Family Information Session Night
- Provide teachers, principals, and PTOs with blurbs to send out to families about the program and information sessions

January - February:

- Host **Family Information Session** and upload slide deck on Website
- Hire Coordinator
- Open sign up and begin registering students for MAP pathway and Bridge
- Continue communication about the pathways to families.
- After benchmark testing - send out **direct invites** to underrepresented students who would benefit from the program
- Teachers will use **parent teacher conferences** to promote the program to our underrepresented families

February - March:

- Begin training/PD for Trimester 3.
- Secure resources.
- Work with principals to **finalize schedules**
- Classes begin March 4

March - June:

- Continue working with math department on revising the **appeals process**
- Hire and train for summer Bridge
- Organize MAP spring test
- **Communicate outcomes** from Bridge and MAP with families