

ETS and Lawrence Township Public Schools Piloting New “Math Out of the Box”

Princeton, N.J. (June 20, 2005) — ETS and Lawrence Township Public Schools have begun a three-year pilot project exploring a newly developed curriculum that offers both hands-on math instruction and teacher professional development.

The project involves “Math Out of the Box,” a K-5 inquiry-based math curriculum developed by Clemson University, in cooperation with Carolina Biological Supply, DuPont, Michelin North America, General Electric, and American Honda Foundation.

Math Out of the Box provides students and teachers with active learning opportunities designed to facilitate the cumulative higher-order and critical thinking essential to mathematical achievement.

“The pilot in which Lawrence Township Public Schools is taking part involves the strands of the mathematics curriculum focused on developing algebraic thinking and geometric logic,” explains JoAnn Rock, director of Evaluation for the Policy, Evaluation and Research Center at ETS. “With Math Out of the Box, students are taught mathematical concepts by participating in the four-phase learning cycle of engage, investigate, reflect, and apply.

“Teachers' mathematical knowledge is viewed as an important component of improving student learning in the Math Out of the Box program,” Rock continues. “Through the training activities and implementation of the curriculum in their classrooms, teachers broaden their math knowledge, pedagogy, and attitudes toward the subject.”

Rock is leading the study for ETS with Rosalea Courtney, senior research associate in the Center for Learning & Teaching Research. Assessment specialists, Michael Renz and Jeff Haberstroh, both in Assessment Development at ETS, are developing the measure that will help determine how students involved in the pilot compare with those receiving traditional mathematics instruction.

“Lawrence Township Public Schools is on the cutting edge of inquiry-based pedagogy,” Courtney adds. “We’re working with Sona Polakowski, who coordinates math and science professional development for the district and was involved in the recent implementation of the inquiry-based science initiative, E=MC², in Mercer County schools. Lawrence teachers are open to, and have a lot of experience in, incorporating the newest methodology in their classrooms.”

About ETS

ETS is a nonprofit institution with the mission to advance quality and equity in education by providing fair and valid assessments, research and related services for all people

worldwide. In serving individuals, educational institutions and government agencies around the world, ETS customizes solutions to meet the need for teacher professional development products and services, classroom and end-of-course assessments, and research-based teaching and learning tools. Founded in 1947, ETS today develops, administers and scores more than 24 million tests annually in more than 180 countries, at over 9,000 locations worldwide.