

# Grapevine-Colleyville district postpones middle school curriculum changes

Feb. 07, 2012 – Fort Worth Star-Telegram

By Shirley Jinkins

[syjinkins@star-telegram.com](mailto:syjinkins@star-telegram.com)

COLLEYVILLE -- The Grapevine-Colleyville district will wait to change middle school curriculum tracks until 2013-14 in response to parents' complaints about a plan to combine pre-Advanced Placement students with those now taking basic courses.

"We're listening to our parents. We're hearing them and adjusting our timeline to make sure we give them full information on these changes," spokeswoman Megan Overman said before a meeting Monday night.

The meeting was called last week, before administrators announced the delay Monday.

"We didn't communicate well, and we pledge we'll do much better," Superintendent Robin Ryan said.

The plan was to merge the present track for students taking primarily pre-AP classes with students in what has been called "on-grade-level" course work into a single "college readiness" track. The curriculum plan for gifted and talented students is unchanged.

The phase-in for 2013-14 announced Monday will have sixth- and seventh-graders starting the new college readiness track, with eighth-graders following up in 2014-15.

The original plan, which would have started this fall, would have affected only incoming sixth-graders. It would have gradually expanded in future years until all three middle school grades were under the plan.

"Districts around us have pre-AP for all," said Ryan, who stressed the need for a change at the middle school level. "We need to increase the rigor for all our kids."

Many parents in the standing-room-only crowd of 230 at Monday's meeting said they were relieved that the district had decided to allow more planning time for the transition but still had questions. Officials responded to a few questions submitted on index cards and vowed to answer all of them on the district's website.

"I was a little concerned that it was all happening so quickly, but I'm impressed they heard and decided to delay it," said Michel Kolling, mother of a seventh-grader at Cross Timbers Middle School and a fourth-grader at O.C. Taylor Elementary.

"I think the biggest thing answered tonight is that it's a pre-AP curriculum with extra tools for on-grade-level students. I see this as a benefit -- if everyone is getting more tools."

District officials said they were bringing the middle school curriculum into alignment with the district's comprehensive LEAD 2021 strategic plan, which intends to increase the depth of learning and student performance, and better prepare all middle schoolers for advanced high school and college-level work.

"We're not changing the curriculum. We're changing the sequence of how kids get the curriculum," Rick Westfall, the district's chief learning officer, said in an earlier interview.

Shannon Braun, who has a 15-year-old daughter in high school and an 11-year-old in fifth grade, was also happy about the breather, "but that's just because it delays it."

"When you're listening to this and seeing it on paper, it sounds great," she said. "But it's really a fantasy. I think what they're asking their teachers to do is very, very difficult."

School officials stressed that the rigor of pre-AP classes would not be lost with the change but instead that on-grade-level students would be brought up to that level of accomplishment.

"We have a very diverse student population," Lisa Kenney said. "How do you put those students that cannot speak English in classes with high achievers and teach to them both?"

More information and answers to questions will be posted at [www.gcisd-k12.org](http://www.gcisd-k12.org), administrators said.

Shirley Jinkins,

817-390-7657

Twitter: [@startelegram](https://twitter.com/startelegram)

Read more here: <http://www.star-telegram.com/2012/02/06/3715924/grapevine-colleyville-district.html#storylink=cpy>