



Date: November 29, 2018

To: Navigator Schools Board of Directors

From: James Dent, Chief Academic Officer

Re: Academic Update

### **Math Priority**

- This year we launched an initiative to improve our mathematics instruction using a process called Concrete, Representational and Abstract (CRA). The process helps students (and teachers) move from concrete understanding of math concepts before learning the abstract (such as  $\text{Area} = L \times W$ ). As students of math in this country, we all were taught with a high emphasis on the abstract which does not lead to deep understanding.
- Over the course of the year, we have held three sessions for our teachers and small group instructors. At the end of the most recent session we asked teachers about their confidence and capacity to instruct using CRA as a basis for instruction. There was a strong sense that teachers have improved their practice as a result of this focus. The site leaders have also noted continual improvement of math instruction this year.
- Navigator launched a new math fluency program this year called Reflex. This program, partnered with a weekly focus on math facts, is a second prong of our math improvement this year. In previous year, math fact fluency was not a clear focus. This year, teachers give weekly two-minute tests to monitor progress. In the coming months, students will be offered additional time after school if they have not mastered their facts.

### **Site Leader Development Priority**

- With the opening of WPS, it has been critical to continue to build our internal leadership capacity. This year, our eight coaches and several mentor teachers have received a high level of focus around their coaching skills. As an organization we take pride in the high quality teachers that we have developed and it is through coaching that this has occurred.
- Next year, with the opening of WPS, we will have twelve coaches helping to develop the dozens of fabulous instructors that make up our site teams.

### **Dissemination**

- Navigator recently received a pilot grant from the New Schools Venture Fund to explore the possibility of becoming a "model provider". This 78K grant will allow us to build a plan for next school year in which we can support between 2-5 schools outside our network. This would be made possible by a second, larger grant that we will apply for this spring.
- The partnership with Wonderful Prep continues to go strong. We have visited them twice and they have visited us once so far. The experience has been very positive so far and we have observed a powerful shift in their model thanks to our support. We have

also been able to document many of our best practices through this partnership and have been able to make them available for our own internal use as well.