



Launching Scholars Program: *Creating a Community of Learners*

"The Calculus Project is unlike any initiative in public education that aims close the achievement gap in mathematics." -Brookline High School website

In the 2015/16 school year, the Needham Public Schools first launched a program entitled **Launching Scholars** narrowly focused on reducing the achievement gap in math of sub-populations of students as indicated by our MCAS data. **Launching Scholars**, based on the work of Dr. Adrian Mims and Brookline's Calculus Project, is a program by which students are invited to join a small cohort starting in grade 7 and continue in the program through high school graduation. Launching Scholars invites students by promoting a culture of scholarship, resiliency, teamwork, and grit.

Students are invited to the program based on their academic assessments and performance at High Rock Middle School, as well as consultation with teachers. During the program, we plan to provide engaging, advanced work to transform and enhance the academics offered to our middle school students. We have been working in collaboration with high school teachers to ensure alignment and advanced work, which we expect, will "launch" these students into advanced work in the high school and beyond. Our goal, ultimately, is to provide students with an opportunity to become scholars in Math and other curricular areas and to improve **advocacy, skills, and confidence**.

There are two portions of the program:

1. A one-week of summer enrichment at Pollard Middle School (Monday, August 21-Friday, August 25, 2017 from 9:00am-1:00pm). Students preview the grade 7 and 8 math material and focus on growth mindset and SEL competencies.
2. After-school academic support with our own Pollard teachers one day a week throughout the school year that previews math content and reviews material necessary to being a successful learning and participant.

Student Testimonial:

"I like how it helps me with upcoming math so that I can get some extra practice and get ahead of the next unit."

Parent Testimonial: *"At a time when math can really turn students off as it did for me as a student, my daughter has not been discouraged or turned away from math as a result of her time with Launching Scholars. She does not love math still, but does feel more confident that she is ready to be successful in her classes and at the high school."*

Teacher Testimonial:

"Seeing these kids is the best part of my week. They're excited, eager to learn, energetic, and dedicated. They look out for one another. I've witnessed tremendous growth in their math skills, confidence, character, and navigation in social situations. They amaze me."

"As a teacher, it is incredible to watch these students grow into the learners that they are today, and solve problems they initially did not think they could do. Seeing a child smile and realize they are capable of something they did not believe they could do is one of the most rewarding parts of this program."

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