

Memo

To: Barb Dill-Varga, Assistant Superintendent

From: Cameron Muir and Rosanne Williamson

Date: May 6, 2009

Re: TI- Nspire Calculator Proposal

Requested Action: We are asking the Board of Education to approve for student purchase the TI-Nspire calculator (current price for each calculator = \$139.00) for Glenbrook North High School and the TI-Nspire CAS (current price for each calculator = \$141.11) for Glenbrook South High School.

For the better part of two decades, the graphing calculator has been used by math educators in the Glenbrooks to enhance the math experience for students in the classroom. These tools allow teachers to spend more time helping students comprehend the meaning of problems, see multiple ways to solve problems and to achieve a deeper conceptual understanding of mathematics. Since the 1994-1995 school year the Glenbrooks have required students to purchase graphing calculators for use in mathematics classes and 2001, when the TI-84 was adopted, was the last time the Board of Education approved a new graphing calculator for GBN and GBS.

The TI-Nspire is the next generation of calculator that will further these capabilities. An additional capability in some, but not in all, graphing calculators is the functionality of a Computer Algebra System (CAS). It is also available in one version of the TI-Nspire - the TI-Nspire CAS. GBN is seeking to adopt the TI-Nspire and to use the TI-Nspire CAS in select courses. GBS is seeking to adopt the TI-Nspire CAS in all mathematics courses.

TI-Nspire CAS is allowed on many standardized tests including the SAT and for Advanced Placement. However, while the TI-Nspire calculator is allowed on the ACT, the Nspire CAS is not currently permitted. Both schools are planning on phasing in the calculator of choice using a thoughtful approach considering the many factors unique to each school's community and math departments. A table indicating sender school calculator usage, the cost of the calculators, distinct implementation plans and professional development are outlined in parts III and IV of the document reviewed at the last board meeting.

This proposal has been thoroughly discussed by the administrative teams at both campuses and the district and is supported by all. The aforementioned document, which was shared and discussed at the previous board meeting on May 11, 2009, describes the initiative change from the past generation calculators (TI-8X series) to the current generation (TI-Nspire) that the two math departments intend to implement beginning next school year.