

Hazelwood alum writes book to inspire young students

Photo courtesy Hazelwood School District

Hazelwood School District alumnus Quinn Woodard has visited Armstrong, Arrowpoint, and Jury Elementary School in recent weeks to share his book, "Like Me," with first grade students.



Though his professional calling is electrical engineering,

Hazelwood School District alumnus Quinn Woodard has two other passions: writing and mentoring students.

Woodard has visited Armstrong, Arrowpoint, and Jury Elementary School in recent weeks to share his book, "Like Me," with first grade students.

The book talks about different science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) careers that students can explore, and introduces them to several African-American pioneers in STEM.

Woodard, currently an engineer for Chevron, is an advocate for Project Lead the Way, a nonprofit organization that provides STEM curriculum for schools across the country, including all HSD schools.

His goal is to build on what

students learn in the classroom.

"Although we have great programs, there still are other opportunities to get students interested in STEM fields," he said.

That drive inspired him to write "Like Me" to introduce minority students to STEM options at a young age.

Woodard read to one class at each school and provided all students in those classrooms with a copy of his book.

He attended Jury Elementary and Kirby Middle School before graduating from Hazelwood East High School in 2007.

Woodard earned a degree in electrical engineering from the University of Tulsa and later earned an MBA from Indiana University.

Math314 Tries To Help Students Do More Than Memorize Math Equations



Washington University's Institute for School Partnership's Math314 program is training teachers to take a more conversational approach to math instruction.

What is there to say about the number 7? It's odd, it's prime. It can be reached by adding $3 + 4$, $5 + 2$ and $6 + 1$.

That may be how a teacher has a "math conversation" with young students under a new approach to math education piloted by Washington University's Institute for School Partnership, called Math314.

"We want math class to not be about sets of procedures to learn, but it's really about how you're thinking and solving problems," said Jeff Kennedy, a math instructional specialist at the institute.

Wash U's school partnership center has long supported science and engineering curricula and teacher training, but it moved into the math field with Math314 two years ago. The partnership has been testing the program in the University City and Hazelwood school districts. It's now available to school districts throughout the region.

Math314 is not a curriculum or set of learning standards but an attempt to adjust how both educators and students approach mathematics.

The reframing of math learning away from simply memorizing the steps to completing an equation comes as math skills have stagnated nationwide.

"If the teachers are telling students how to solve a problem, and then that problem isn't exactly what's on the test, it creates this disequilibrium for a student," said Beverly Velloff, the math and science curriculum coordinator for the University City School District.

Fewer than half of students in Missouri and the U.S. are considered proficient in mathematics. Just 42% of Missouri students [passed state math assessments](#) in 2018 and 2019. Nationally, just 41% of fourth graders tested proficient on the [National Assessment of Educational Progress](#); only a quarter of high school seniors passed their test.

Tracking test score improvements will be one measure for the program, designers said, as will gauging how excited students are about math instruction.

"We'll always be measured by state assessments," Velloff said, but "the biggest takeaway is when you can feel that increase and there's this empowerment of thinking happening within our buildings."