

NOTIFICATION OF ACCELERATED MATH PATHWAY

November 11, 2015

Dear Family,

In the past three years, Madison-Plains Local Schools has taken steps to ensure that those students who demonstrate potential for success in higher level mathematics are provided a pathway to not only prepare them for success in high school and college but also ensure that such acceleration is in the best interest of the child. At the end of sixth grade, students who demonstrate a history of high performance in mathematical tasks and assessments are identified to participate in our Accelerated Math Pathway during Junior High. The Accelerated Pathway is part of the gifted program at Madison-Plains but does not require gifted identification for students to be included. Your child is currently participating in these courses.

The Accelerated Pathway was designed based on recommendations of mathematics education experts throughout the country to ensure that while students are engaged in above grade level math learning they do not develop gaps in their mathematical understanding. For this reason, we do not skip grade level content. Rather, our pathway is a compacted curriculum that allows students to take three years of math in two years. During the first year, students take 7th grade Accelerated Math which includes all of the seventh grade standards and approximately half of the 8th grade math standards. In the 8th grade, students complete the grade level standards and all of Algebra I. Such a pathway, requires dedication and commitment on the part of the teacher and student to teach and learn math at an accelerated pace.

To help students transition through the pathway, we have some checkpoints to ensure students are being successful. It is not in the best interest of any child to continue on an accelerated path if they cannot keep up with the pace or begin to develop gaps or misconceptions. This will only hinder the student's future learning and performance. While a number of factors are considered in the continued placement of students in these courses, the number one factor is based on their success with state assessments specifically scoring in the Advanced or Accelerated range. The second most important factor is student success on Algebra Readiness tasks relative to the grade level mathematics they have already learned.

Many parents ask the question, "Why are grades not a consideration in this process?" While grades are an indicator of student success in school, not all grades are an indicator of mastery of content. Grades often take into account factors such as compliance with classroom policies, completion of work, or

even assignments completed with support of the teacher. These are certainly important indicators that a student is doing well in school yet they are not specific to the question, “Has the child mastered the skills necessary to be successful in higher levels of mathematics?” The best way to answer that specific question is through assessment of mathematical tasks that require higher-level thinking.

Student progress will be checked at the following points. If at any of these checkpoints, the teacher or team finds that the student is having difficulty with the course content, the parent will be notified and a conversation will begin about the appropriate math placement for the student.

- End of first semester, 7th grade Accelerated Math: Using classroom and/or district assessments, the classroom teacher recommends a student to continue in the Accelerated Pathway or move to a regular 7th grade math course.
- End of year, 7th grade Accelerated Math: Using district algebra readiness assessments and upon receiving the results of state assessments, a team consisting of the math teachers, building principal, Director of Curriculum, and gifted specialists will place students in either 8th grade Math or 8th grade Algebra I.
- End of first semester, 8th grade Algebra I: Using classroom and/or district assessments, the classroom teacher recommends a student to continue in the Accelerated Pathway or move to a regular 8th grade math course.
- End of year, 8th grade Algebra I: Using district assessments and upon receiving the results of state assessments, a team consisting of the math teachers, building principal, Director of Curriculum, and gifted specialists will place students in either HS Geometry or recommend the student re-take Algebra I during their freshmen year.

I hope this letter clarifies any questions you may have. I encourage you to participate in Parent-Teacher conferences next week and talk to your child’s math teacher about their progress in an accelerated course. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

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