

INSTRUCTION

Standard Instructional Program

Placement and Heterogeneous Grouping in Mathematics

This regulation supercedes Regulation 3250.1.

I. PURPOSE

To provide information and guidance about placement and heterogeneous grouping in mathematics classes.

II. GROUPING IN MATHEMATICS—Grades K Through 12

To ensure that all students have equal access to the mathematics content described by the Program of Studies, students should not be placed in mathematics courses or classes based on perceived ability or previously earned grades. The mathematics program for more capable students should be enriched by extending the objectives in the Program of Studies.

III. PLACEMENT IN MATHEMATICS—Grades K Through 12

Students are placed in the next grade level course upon earning a passing grade in the preceding grade level or prerequisite course. Decisions about placement exceptions are made by the building principal in consultation with the Fairfax County Public Schools mathematics coordinator or specialist on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the criteria outlined in this regulation.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. Elementary School

The elementary school mathematics Program of Studies defines grade-level objectives by strands as the goal for all students on a particular grade level. All students should explore the mathematics content defined by the objectives for that grade level. Reinforcement and/or remedial activities should be provided for individual students as needed. Teachers may employ flexible grouping for specific topics. Students within a class will not be permanently assigned to ability-level groups. Enrichment activities, including extensions of grade-level objectives or topics not included in the Program of Studies at a higher grade level, are appropriate program modifications for more capable students.

All students are routinely placed in classes that offer the respective grade-level mathematics Program of Studies. Students are not placed in a particular grade-

level class using criteria based on perceived ability in mathematics. Students may be accelerated only after they have achieved mastery of grade-level Program of Studies objectives. Other factors should be considered in determining a beneficial placement for students. Evaluation done by school staff members in conjunction with a mathematics specialist should be used to ensure that acceleration is an appropriate program modification for those students.

B. Secondary School

The secondary school mathematics Program of Studies defines course objectives by topics as the goal for all students in a particular course. Teachers may employ flexible grouping within courses for specific topics. Enrichment activities, including extensions of course objectives or topics not included in the Program of Studies for another course, are appropriate program modifications for more capable students. Teachers should vary techniques to provide alternative approaches to the same objective to accommodate students with different learning styles and needs. Students within a class will not be permanently assigned to ability-level groups.

All students routinely select and are placed in a course, provided they have earned a passing grade in the prerequisite course. Accelerated courses, defined by the Program of Studies are available for more advanced students in grades 7 through 12. Specific passing grades earned in prerequisite courses may not be used to exclude students from classes. Teachers and counselors recommend appropriate courses; however, a student and his or her parents or guardians have the right to select any course for which the student has satisfied the prerequisite.

The structure of the secondary mathematics curriculum groups students with similar interests and experiences together by definition of course content and prerequisites. All secondary mathematics courses are defined by the Program of Studies. Course offerings will not be modified by either reducing the number of objectives or simplifying the complexity of objectives for the purpose of providing different levels of the same course. All sections for the same course have the same objectives as defined by the Program of Studies. Therefore, students will not be placed in different sections of the same course based on perceived ability or grades in prerequisite courses.

Credits are accepted, and subsequent placement in appropriate courses is granted, for courses satisfactorily completed in accredited colleges and universities when prior written approval of the principal and mathematics coordinator has been granted, provided a minimum of 140 clock hours of instruction are included. Students enrolling in programs that offer courses of less than 140 hours of instruction will demonstrate, upon completion of the course, that they have met the aims and objectives of the course by passing an appropriate test before credit is awarded or placement in the next course is granted.