

Information for Rising 8th Grade Students from the Math Department

We know that many parents have questions about selecting their child's math placement for next year. This is an important decision that you and your student need to make together. We hope we can provide you with information about the options available, our process for placement, and other variables affecting your student, so you can make an informed decision.

There are four possibilities for 8th grade math course selection.

- Those students who successfully complete Algebra 1 Honors in the seventh grade will take **Geometry Honors** in the eighth grade.

Students who successfully complete Math 7 or Math 7 Honors will be enrolled in one of three classes next year.

- The first option, **Mathematics Grade 8**, extends the student's study of pre-algebra, basic geometry, and data analysis concepts as well as skills and strategies for collecting and analyzing data that were started in Math 7 or Math 7 Honors. The use of calculators, computers, and other technology is integrated within the instruction. This course provides an excellent grounding in the skills critical for success in Algebra 1 in high school. In the spring, Math 8 students take the Mathematics 8 Virginia Standards of Learning Test, which tests the math objectives for grade 8.
- The 2nd and 3rd options are high school credit courses—**Algebra I** and **Algebra 1 Honors**. These courses extend the students' knowledge and understanding of the real number system and its properties through the study of variables, expressions, equations, inequalities, and analysis of data derived from real-world phenomena. These courses will become a part of your student's high school transcript. At the end of both Algebra courses, students will be taking the Algebra I End of Course Standards of Learning test for a verified credit toward high school graduation. Students in each of these courses should plan on at least 30 minutes of homework each day.

What makes the Algebra I honors course different from the Algebra I? First, additional enriched topics have been integrated into the honors course providing more depth to the material being taught, but reducing the time for review of basic concepts that should have been mastered in the seventh grade. Second, the advanced enrichment material is meant to be mathematically challenging and will require more effort and homework on the part of your student. This means that the Algebra I honors curriculum is more in depth and proceeds slightly faster than the Algebra I course.

Your student's 8th grade math placement is a joint decision between teachers, counselors, parents, and students. At the beginning of 4th quarter, letters will be mailed to each 7th grade student recommending them for Mathematics 8, Algebra I, Algebra I Honors, or Geometry Honors. The recommendations are based on your student's academic progress and achievement, motivation, work habits, including the completion of homework, and their

perseverance and ability to master new concepts with little direction. Teachers will assess your student's mastery of pre-algebra concepts, ability to apply math concepts to real world problems, and their ability to reason abstractly. The seventh grade math teachers will also take into consideration the characteristics of the different curriculums, the levels of difficulty and the course expectations, when they make their recommendations.

When you receive the math recommendation letter, please discuss the teacher's recommendation with your child. This is a great time to discuss with your child their goals in mathematics and their expectations for 8th grade. In math it's a big leap to go from the concrete concepts learned in elementary school to the abstract math concepts of algebra. Some students are just not quite ready for this leap. Listen to your student and together decide which math placement is best suited for your child.

Please trust your math teacher's insights about your student, they see them in action doing math on a daily basis and they want what is best for your student. They want your student placed in the math class where they will be the most successful. Your student's math teachers also want to ensure that your student has the solid foundation in mathematics they need to be successful in high school.

The most important part of this decision is that your student has a successful math experience that he or she can carry those skills and knowledge on to higher levels.

We realize that this can often be a difficult decision. Please be assured that the math and guidance departments are here to work with you to find the most appropriate placement for your child. If you wish to discuss the recommendation with the counselors or teachers, please give them a call before you sign the recommendation form.