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### **Middle School Mathematics Placement for the 2020-2021 School Year**

Dear APS Families,

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) has given school districts guidance regarding acceleration of students in Mathematics during the 2020-2021 school year. Guidance includes:

- Considering the individual needs of every child when making decisions that have long-term consequences regarding mathematics learning, especially those [districts] that choose to move forward with acceleration of students in mathematics.
- Re-examining acceleration practices, particularly during the 2020-2021 school year, to ensure that students have sufficient time to recover unfinished learning from the previous school year while still allowing adequate time for the development of knowledge, skills, and processes in the new grade level.
- Ensuring that students enrolled in an Algebra I course during the 2020-2021 school year have had opportunities to demonstrate a solid understanding of the grades K-8 Mathematics Standards of Learning. “Algebra readiness” describes the mastery of, and the ability to apply, the Mathematics Standards of Learning, including the Mathematical Process Goals for Students, for kindergarten through grade eight. The content and mathematical processes developed in Algebra I are foundational in the further study of mathematics and science at the high school level.

Our goal is to ensure that our placement recommendations and course offerings are in the best interest of each individual child. Due to the school closure, we were unable to obtain most of the data points that are used to recommend appropriate mathematics placement. In particular, those that give us a more recent indication of a student’s readiness for an accelerated and compacted course are not available. We have, therefore, decided that we will gather more data and determine a final math placement recommendation in the Fall. It is important to note, a student’s initial course placement is not final, as students will be given the opportunity to demonstrate readiness for more advanced courses.

After careful consideration, we have also decided to modify our 6th grade mathematics course offerings for the 2020-2021 school year. APS has offered a heavily compacted Pre-Algebra for 6th graders course which encompasses the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade VDOE mathematics standards. We recognize, with school closures, most students have unfinished learning from grade 5. Because of this, we would be required to compound unfinished learning with an additional 3 years of curriculum. This is not in the best interest of most students and goes against the recommendation of the VDOE. We do, however, recognize that some APS students are ready for, and can handle, pre-algebra content through grade 8, thus we will be offering some sections of Math 6 Extended at all middle school sites. Math 6 Extended will include missed grade 5 VDOE mathematics standards, all of grade 6 and 7 standards, and power standards within the grade 8 curriculum. All students, regardless of 6th grade mathematics placement, will have the opportunity to take a compacted course in grade 7 and Algebra I by grade 8 should they demonstrate readiness. Students who successfully complete Math 6 Extended will have the opportunity to demonstrate readiness for enrollment in Intensified Algebra as a 7th grader. Recommendations for enrollment in the Math 6 Extended course will be decided and communicated in the Fall and final math placement for the 2020-2021 school year will be determined by October.