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Middle School Mathematics Placement for the 2020-2021 School Year

Dear APS Families,

The Virginia Department of Education 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 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. Students who have not yet begun high school credit courses will receive a schedule with a temporary math placement in the course that most aligns with the course they were enrolled in during the 2019-2020 school year (see table below). In addition, we have revised the structure of the curriculum such that students will engage in new learning regardless of initial placement. A student’s initial course placement is not final, as students will have an opportunity to demonstrate readiness for a more advanced course. Students who have already passed a high school credit course, such as Algebra I, will automatically begin the year in the appropriate subsequent course. Due to the critical nature of Algebra I, we are recommending that parents discuss the option of spending an additional year in Algebra I with their child if they feel they did not learn the content at great depth. As explained by the Virginia Department of Education, “The content and mathematical processes developed in Algebra I are foundational in the further study of mathematics and science at the high school level.” Parents who wish for their child to spend an additional year in Algebra I in order to afford the child the opportunity to deepen learning should reach out to the school. Permanent math placement for all students for the 2020-2021 school year will occur by October.

2019-2020 Course	Initial Fall Course Prior to Placement for SY2020-2021
Math 6	Math 7
Pre-Algebra 6	Pre-Algebra 7
Math 7	Pre-Algebra 8
Pre-Algebra 7	Pre-Algebra 8
Intensified Algebra I	Intensified Geometry