

Hello and thank you for your interest in our program. It will be my great pleasure to help you in any way I am able. In order to aid you in better understand our program; below are questions that have been asked by other persons interested in our mathematics curriculum. Please look them over and feel free to send me any additional questions that you may have.

Sincerely,  
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I am curious to know what your math program is like. Are you on a 6 period day?

We have a 6 period day, 56 minute classes, with two semesters per year. Our mathematics courses are Algebra I, Geometry, Advanced Geometry, Algebra II, Advanced Algebra II, Pre-Calculus, Honors Precalculus, and AP Calculus. Advanced students pass over Algebra I in the high school and reach Calculus through the advanced program.

What is the current order that your students would take as their math courses?

In high school, non advanced students take Geometry, grade 9, Algebra I, grade 10, (where we present the more complex topics left out of the 8th grade, Algebra II, grade 11, and Precalculus, grade 12.

This is our first year with Algebra One as a 10<sup>th</sup> grade course; our second with Geometry as a 9th grade course. We did this to create consecutive courses for Algebras I and II.

Is Algebra 2 only offered as a one-year course?

Algebra II is a 1 year course, at this point we do not plan to make it two years.

Do you have summer programs to get your students ready? Etc...

No. Each individual teacher offers help when they feel they are available. I myself offer help before and after school, but I rarely have students take advantage.

How are students graded?

Teachers utilize a traditional grading scale. We all collect homework and notes as part of the students' grades along with any other projects, etc. Although we currently have 98% passing, students don't all pass the first time, some students have to repeat, (and pass), the course as seniors to graduate.

What is passing? Do you mean that your students earn above an F or does passing mean something else?

Passing is 60 percent or better; D-. Furthermore, some of those 98% failed the first time and had to retake the course.

### What about failing students?

We always have more freshmen failures than we would like to see. Now the freshmen course is Geometry, before it was Algebra I. It seems to be a freshmen problem not a course problem. The students who fail any math course must double up the next year with that course and the next required course. Consequently, we have a number of students in two math classes. This is the first year with that policy, but it seems to be working satisfactorily. By and large the cause of students failing is that they neglect to study or complete assignments. Content does not seem to be the issue; effort is. We are finding this year that our 10th grade Algebra Ones are doing much better than in the past.

For Algebra II we receive a great deal of support from administration and counseling who will also keep track of who is currently failing and will speak with students to remind them of requirements. Parents are contacted, etc. Basically we closely watch the progress of these students and we are constantly reminding them that they can not graduate without passing this class. Our vocational education and elective teachers have also been very supportive in reminding the students that they need to successfully complete their required courses.

### Do you complete all High School Content Expectations?

All content expectations are covered, however, some Algebra II topics are in Algebra I; for example some probability topics, scatter plots and trend lines. The HSCE require the topics to be covered some time in High School, they are not restricted to that specific course. The course listings are guidelines.

### We would love to know what math series you use?

We use Prentice Hall for Algebra I and II and HRW for Geometry and Precalculus. We review books and choose the book most appropriate to our needs at the time of purchase. Our Middle School uses Holt Pre-Algebra in the 7th grade and Holt Algebra I in the 8th grade.

You do not give high school credit to students who take algebra I as eighth graders. How do they earn the high school algebra I credit as set forth by the state guidelines if they score above a B- and do not take algebra I in high school? (According to your curriculum guide, students would take advanced algebra II after advanced geometry, seemingly avoiding algebra I.)

A notation will be made to the student's transcripts stating that the Algebra One requirement was completed in the eighth grade.

What pros and cons have you and your colleagues experienced as you made the switch regarding math sequences, and how long has this order has been in place. What has the influence been on the Algebra I students' grades?

To effect the switch from 9th grade Algebra I to Geometry, we had two grades in Geometry (9th and 10th) all at the same time. We used class sets of books and ran copies for homework. That was a con, however; we chose to save funds and not purchase extra books that would only be needed for one year.

Now that the switch is complete, we have not run into any major problems. We have about the same number of freshmen failures, (now Geometry, was Algebra 1) as in the past, perhaps slightly less. One pro is that our Algebra I students are doing significantly better. We believe the preparation in the middle school with 8th grade Algebra has been a large contributing factor to the improvement. We hope another pro will be having the Algebra courses consecutive. We will not see the results until the 2009-2010 school year.

What kind of grades were students earning in Algebra II before you switched Geometry and Algebra I?

We made Algebra II a requirement one year and switched Geometry and Algebra One the next year. Prior to the change in requirement Algebra II was an elective and I believe most students passed, but I don't have the numbers on that. We won't see the results of the Algebra I/Geometry switch until the 2009-2010 school year.

Do they struggle solving for variables in geometry?

No more than was usual. Remember, students are getting Algebra in the 8th grade, and come to us with experience solving equations.

What does your 8th grade algebra course cover?

All of our 8th grade students focus on Algebra I topics as listed by the grade 8 Grade Level Content Expectations, (GLCE). The Geometry GLCE are added in where appropriate. Advanced students delve deeper into the concepts and follow close to the high school Algebra One curriculum. For example, regular 8th grade students will do absolute value equations but not absolute value inequalities. Advanced 8th grade students will address both.

Have you had any parents concerned with their children taking Algebra I as an 8th grader and again as a 10th grader?

None as of yet; we use different books and those retaking the class had a low skill level in 8th grade, and need the extra support.