

From the Principal

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Understanding the Mathematics Program

Over the years, parents have asked about the organization and sequence of the Los Altos School District Mathematics Program. Today's article is a summary of philosophy, organization, and progression of the program from Grade 4 to Grade 12.

In the primary grades, each school site has the option of implementing continuous progress by providing acceleration in the classroom instructional program. Sometimes regrouping of primary children takes place to meet certain skills and abilities.

No later than Grade 4, each school establishes a common math hour for their children. Based upon past work history and identified assessments, children are grouped for math instruction in the leveled class best meeting learning needs and level of concept mastery.

To maintain advanced grade level placement, all elementary students working in the accelerated programs should maintain a grade of B or higher in the class.

The staffs at Springer, Blach and Egan, and Los Altos and Mountain View High Schools stress the importance of solid preparation in fundamental skills over acceleration.

Student placement is based upon subjective and objective criteria:

- Math Learner characteristics (our math teachers stress that work habits and strong interest as ability)
- Scores on the California Math Standards Test
- Scores on the Year to be skipped test
- Scores of the Test of Essential Understanding
- Scores on Grade Level Placement Test

Points are awarded to each section of the above criteria. Following the collection of all data points, a total score is calculated and matched against the qualifying score for accelerated placement. Since the data from the STAR Test does not arrive until late July, class placements for Grades 4, 5, and 6 are not made until August.

The question arising most often is based upon the STAR level called ADVANCED. The STAR level of ADVANCED does not coordinate with automatic placement in the Los Altos Accelerated Program. To be considered for acceleration, the ADVANCED level on the STAR Test must be achieved. The designation of ADVANCED acts as a gate keeper for further consideration. Once a student is recognized as ADVANCED on the STAR Test, the school then calculates the scoring from the Learner Characteristics, Year to Be Skipped Test, Grade Level Placement Test, and Essential Understandings Test.

Please keep in mind the Los Altos School District Math Program coordinates Grade 4 through Grade 12. Students have annual opportunity to cross into different groupings as they progress through the grades. Once a student reaches Grade 9, they have choices. A student may opt for honors classes. The only requirement is to maintain a grade of B or better.

Again, if a student develops a strong mathematical understanding in the lower grades, high school math opportunities are endless. The key is preparation and foundation.

Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
Accelerated 5	Accelerated 6	Advanced Pre Algebra
Grade Level 4	Grade Level 5	Accelerated Grade 6
		Grade Level 6

Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9
Advanced Pre-Algebra	Advanced Algebra	Honors Geometry
Pre Algebra 1	Algebra	Geometry
Pre Algebra 1.1	Pre Algebra 1.2	Geometry
		Algebra 1
		Algebra 1.1

Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Algebra ii	Trig + Analysis	Calculus
Algebra ii	Trig + Analysis	Calculus
Geometry	Algebra II	Trig + Analysis
Algebra 1.2	Algebra I	Geometry