

Mountain View Whisman School District

Agenda Item for Board Meeting of February 8, 2024

Agenda Category: ConsentAgenda

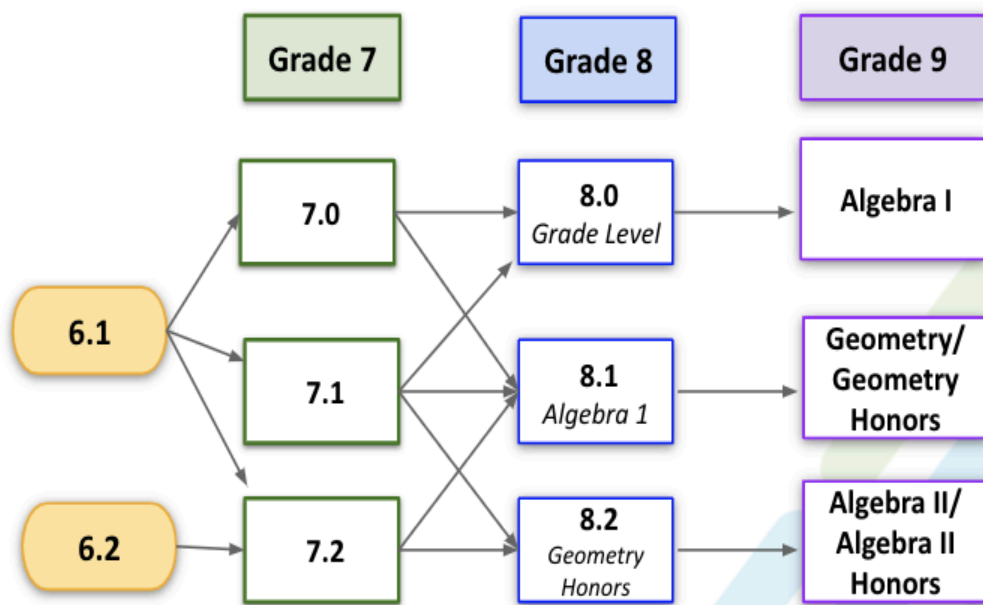
Agenda Item Title: Middle School Math Update

Person Responsible: Cathy Baur - Chief Academic Officer
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Background: MVWSD's work with middle school math is aligned with Strategic Plan 2027 Goal #1 - Providing effective and consistent instructional practices for all students and Initiative 1a.3 - Develop programs to increase opportunities for underrepresented students to reach high levels of success. Work in 2023-24 includes researching middle school math in surrounding districts including pathways and criteria for placement.

Aligned with the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics, MVWSD offers various math pathways at both our middle schools to meet the needs of all students. After the approval of the California New Mathematics Framework in July 2023, we wanted to provide the Board of Trustees with an update on next steps with middle school math at MVWSD.

At our middle schools, there are multiple pathways offered at each grade level. All students enter 6th grade on track to completing Algebra 1 in 8th grade and all pathways lead to enrollment in A-G courses in high school. Having the various pathways allows flexibility for students to move into or out of pathways based on data at the end of each year. The visual below shows the current MVWSD math pathways and their learning progression in getting students ready for high school mathematics.



Current MVWSD Math Placement Process: California Department of Education (CDE) recommends that school districts create a system for gathering evidence of a student’s readiness for an accelerated pathway. Our middle school math placement decision is based on multiple student assessment data points including

- CAASPP Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments for math (SBAC for math), and
- End of year and beginning of year i-Ready Diagnostic Assessments for math

Preliminary middle school math placements are made at the end of the year based on i-Ready Diagnostic 3 assessment data and then, when the CAASPP scores and August i-Ready Diagnostic 1 assessment data is available in Fall, math placements are confirmed. Students have another opportunity to move placement based on their August i-Ready Diagnostic 1 assessment. Appropriate placement is important in making sure that the foundational skills in grades 6th-8th prepare students for success in Algebra and beyond. Response to Instruction (RTI) periods are available to students in any math pathway. RTI is aimed at improving students' academic outcomes by addressing their targeted needs. Although not all students have an RTI period.

California New Mathematics Framework and Review of Neighboring School Districts: In July 2023, the State Board of Education (SBE) adopted the *Mathematics Framework for California Public Schools: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve (Mathematics Framework)*. While the Mathematics Framework does not provide explicit guidance to school districts on math pathways, it recognizes the diversity of student achievement and sets out ways to teach that ensure that all students receive appropriate support and challenge.

After the New Mathematics Framework was adopted and in alignment with Strategic Plan 2027 we reached out to our neighboring school districts and researched if they were implementing any changes to middle school math instruction and pathways. Research findings from the initial eight

school districts show that no changes are being made to their middle school math placement process in the light of the New Mathematics Framework being implemented.

Math Pathways Research Findings:

All school districts we researched offer grade level, accelerated, and/or advanced math pathways. Multiple measures for middle school math placement are currently being used across school districts that include standardized CAASPP state assessments, district based local assessments, as well as specific middle school math placement assessments. A few school districts also consider habits of mind as a criteria for middle school placement. Some other school districts consider student performance and grades through the school year as a placement criteria, in addition to the standardized assessments.

- *Sunnyvale School District* - Sunnyvale has a grade level pathway called ‘Common Core’ and then an accelerated ‘Compacted Common Core’ pathway for each of their middle school grade levels. The accelerated pathway covers 1.5 years of math content in one year.
- *San Jose Unified School District* - San Jose Unified offers grade level and accelerated math pathways for 6th, 7th and 8th grade students. The accelerated pathway at San Jose Unified is designed for 7th grade students to have the option of taking Algebra 1, if they show readiness for the advanced course.
- *Cupertino School District* - Cupertino changed their math pathway offerings in 2021. All 6th graders are placed in the same course - ‘Math Flex’. Students in this course that perform higher are provided extension work to prepare for advanced courses in 7th grade. Based on the end of 6th grade Diagnostic placements, 7th graders are offered the grade level pathway (Math 7), the accelerated pathway (Math 7+), or the advanced Math 7/8/Algebra 1 course. 8th graders at Cupertino middle schools have the option of either Math 8, Algebra 1, or Geometry course.
- *Palo Alto Unified School District* - Palo Alto also offers ‘Foundational Math’ and advanced courses. Based on the readiness assessment results, students are placed and then they can take the ‘Math Validation Process’ assessment if they would like to be placed in the advanced math course. Students in all middle school pathways can take the “Validation Process’ assessment. Their middle school math program follows a compacted program where four years of math is covered in three years. Although the high school math program is a ‘choice program’.
- *Milpitas Unified School District* - Milpitas Unified offers ‘Traditional’, ‘Accelerated’, ‘Advanced’, and ‘Extension’ pathways for students at middle schools. The ‘Extension’ pathway allows students moving from 6th grade to take an ‘Accelerated’ Math 8 course or a Math 7 course and could take Pre-Calculus - AP Statistics in 9th grade.
- *Los Altos School District* - Los Altos offers math pathways similar to our district - 6th graders can take the grade level pathway or the accelerated pathway that covers 7th grade

math content as well. Students take Algebra 1, Geometry, Geometry Hons., or Algebra II as they transition to high school.

- *Fremont Unified School District* - Fremont offers grade level pathway “Course 1” for students in middle school as well as a “Math Essentials” course for 7th graders in addition to an accelerated “Course 2/3” The Course 1 pathway leads to students taking Algebra 1 in 9th grade and accelerated course 3 leads to students taking either Algebra 2-Trigonometry or Geometry in 9th grade.
- *Los Gatos School District* - Los Gatos offers 6th grade students the grade level ‘CC’ and the accelerated ‘CC+’ pathway. Students in 7th grade have the option to take the grade level pathway, the accelerated pathway, or the Algebra 1 course. Similarly, 8th graders can take the grade level pathway, Algebra 1, or Geometry course.

Current Work:

Appropriate math placement is critical for students because moving through concepts at a suitable pace is crucial to ensuring their long-term success in high school and college coursework. At MVWSD, we take very careful consideration when placing students and changes in placement for students who did not meet the criteria for advanced math pathways (.1 and .2) are unlikely. However, we incorporated a new Math Placement Appeal Process this year for families. Parents/Guardians complete the Math Appeals Form and submit it to the school office or email it to the school principal. A Math Placement Appeals Team composed of the parent(s), student, math department chair, counselor, and school and district administrators reviews the request and the decision is communicated to parents/guardians in writing within 48 hours.

The Math Appeals Process has been a success after its initial implementation in August/September 2023. We had 9 families across both middle schools that filled out the Math Placement Appeals Form interested in accelerating to a higher math pathway. After the Math Appeals Team meeting, not all families pursued their request. The students were appropriately placed after the Math Appeals Team review. The school staff - teachers and site administrators - did a check-in with the students and their families after Trimester 1 to make sure students continue to thrive academically.

Next Steps:

Based on the most recent i-Ready Diagnostic 2 results and seeing the progress students have made since the beginning of the school year, we have work to do with supporting students in the grade level and .1 math pathways across both our middle schools. We will be working with our middle school site administrators, the math Instructional Coach, and teachers on an instructional plan for students that involves focus on priority standards, review of essential concepts, and developing a plan for the upcoming months to prepare students for the next grade level.

We will continue our conversations with our neighboring school districts and keep our pulse on when publishers will have new math curriculum options available that are based on the *New Mathematics Framework*. Unfortunately, the delay in the adoption of the Mathematics

Framework will delay the District's ability to adopt new curriculum in 2024-25. New Curricula is not anticipated until sometime in early 2025. MVWSD will establish a Middle School Math Committee comprising of staff and stakeholders for the 2025-26 school year that will make recommendations to the Board on updates to the middle school math pathways and review and recommend the adoption of a new math curriculum based on what is available for school districts.