

Pleasantdale School District 107

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Pleasantdale Middle School Talented and Gifted (TAG) Math Placement Updates December 21, 2016

Introduction

In the Spring of 2016, the Talented and Gifted Committee presented revised criteria for the identification of students eligible for Accelerated Math and/or Extended Language Arts courses at Pleasantdale Middle School. While the presented changes were favorably received, concerns were expressed regarding the qualifications for and support provided to students seeking to accelerate their course of study in math. The following represents proposed changes by the Math Instructors and Administration at Pleasantdale Middle School to the TAG program to better support our students.

Historical Background

The process for level changes in Language Arts and Math require different processes, due to the nature of the transition. Students moving into the extended/accelerated Language Arts courses will be going deeper into the grade level standards and curriculum. Students seeking to transition into the Accelerated Math classes are truly doing that, accelerating their learning. They are participating in classes that are one to two years above their grade level. Without some additional support/requirements, there may be a gap in students' learning, making the transition challenging at best.

In previous years, students who met identified criteria for level changes in math (test scores, grades) were provided with materials that identified key areas of study and required benchmark assessment(s) and scores to determine readiness for the next level of learning. Students were provided these materials in late May, with testing dates established for late July/early August. The presented materials included connections to online resources and supports to assist the students through the course of study. In the summer of 2016, students were additionally provided with optional weekly times to check-in with instructors for support.

Identified Concerns

Over the years, the above transition program revealed several concerns. As structured, students were required to independently learn complex concepts and materials over the summer months.

Mission

Ensure that each student is a passionate learner empowered with the academic and social skills to responsibly choose and excel in life pursuits.

Students and families summer schedules were not always conducive to allowing students to access supports and/or consistently study and prepare for the transitions. While on-line instructional supports have improved greatly over time, until this past summer instructor support was limited, at best. In essence, students were required to independently learn a full year of curriculum.

Overall our students proved to be successful in independently learning content at the upper levels. Students already in Accelerated Classes seeking to “Double Accelerate” (move from 6th Grade Accelerated to 8th Grade Accelerated [Algebra]) have had the greatest success, with approximately 80% successfully transitioning the past two years. Students moving from their grade level math to Accelerated courses did not fair as well, averaging 62% of students successfully transitioning over the past two years.

Another issue of concern was the timing of the process and the impact it was having on developing building schedules and teacher course assignments. Under the current structure, the final schedule could not be locked in until completion of this process in early August. This also impacted classroom set-up, teacher planning, and parent notification of class assignments.

Proposed Changes

The Math Department and Administration has studied area schools, including our Lyons Township peers, and their approach to handling this transition. Based on a review of these approaches and our own program, we are proposing several changes to the current identification process and the structure of supports provided to the students.

A primary objective is to establish an earlier timeline of identification so students will be able to prepare for the transition during the current school year to avoid the conflicts of summer and the independent nature of the course of study. An additional goal is to improve both the access to staff support and learning materials as well as the measures to determine readiness.

The committee proposes the following changes be implemented this year to best support the students:

- Identification of eligibility at the end of January following Winter MAP testing
- Current qualifying scores to remain the same (TAG 2016): Teacher input to be considered for students with grades and assessment scores approaching qualification criteria
- Scheduled meeting for parents and students qualifying to fully explain the process and requirements
- A clearly developed program of study that includes;
 - Learning resources and materials
 - Recommended timeline for learning, with study initiating in February

- Identified opportunities for weekly check-in with instructors and to monitor progress
- Topical assessments to measure student understanding of new content scheduled throughout the course of study with opportunities for correction/review as opposed to the current structure of summative assessment(s) at the conclusion of the summer.
- Determination of readiness for acceleration at the conclusion of the school year
- Summer resources and supports to continue assisting with the transition will be made available for student practice

Attached to the proposal are the pages from the TAG document with the changes annotated and in final form for your review.

As we continue to target program improvements to best meet the needs of our students, it is our hope that these proposed changes will better support and assist our students seeking to accelerate their learning, opening up higher levels of instruction for them in math. As we move forward, we will continue to work with our partnering schools, teachers, parents, and students to continually improve our processes and services for our students.

Math Placement Criteria:

Accelerated Math for Students entering Grades 5:

Students must meet all three categories listed in the chart below in order to be placed in 5th grade Accelerated Math.

Grades	MAP	CogAT
$\geq 90\%$ Average (Trimesters 1 and 2)	$\geq 90\%$ Average (Fall, Winter, and Spring)	≥ 120

Qualifications for Level Changes:

On-Level to Accelerated Math (Students entering Grades 6-8): Students in On-Level Math wishing to move to Accelerated Math must first meet the criteria listed below.

Grades	MAP	CogAT
$\geq 90\%$ Average (Trimesters 1 and 2)	$\geq 90\%$ Average (Fall, Winter, and Spring)	≥ 120

In order to best support students through this process, identification will be made for students meeting the above criteria following the Winter MAP assessment. Students who meet the criteria will be invited to participate in a supported study group targeted to provide resources and materials to best prepare students for acceleration. The program will include: provided resources and learning materials; opportunities for weekly check-in with instructors; assessments to measure understanding of the new content; recommended learning timeline to best prepare for the transition. Based on student progress in the supported study group, Spring MAP and CoGAT assessments, and ongoing classroom grades, a determination will be made at the end of the school year to accelerate, continue in guided study throughout the summer, or maintain current level placement. Additional resources may be provided to students over the summer months to assist in the transition.

Grade 6 Accelerated Math to 8th Grade Accelerated (Algebra):

Students currently enrolled in Grade 6 Accelerated Math wishing to move to Grade 8 Algebra must first meet the criteria listed below. **Students must have been enrolled in the Grade 6 Accelerated Math program in order to be considered for the Grade 8 Accelerated (Algebra) program.**

Grades	MAP	CogAT
≥ 95% Average (Trimesters 1 and 2)	≥ 95% Average (Fall, Winter)	≥ 130

The same identification timeline and supports, as described above for level changes, will be provided to qualifying students.

Additional Placement Consideration:

Additional placement consideration will be given to students whose grades and assessment scores are approaching the identified qualification criteria. A determination for further review will be based on teacher recommendation and current class progress.

New Enrollments - Grades 5-8

Students new to the district will be evaluated using CogAT and STAR/MAP testing, though student records from previous schools will be considered. All students new to the district will be reviewed on an individual basis and assessed on the measures below for placement. Meeting the specified measures will qualify a student for placement into extended/accelerated classes. A writing sample (ELA) may also be requested.

Content Area	CogAT	STAR/MAP Scores	District Assessment
Math	≥ 120	≥ 90%	≥ 88%
ELA	≥ 120	≥ 90%	N/A

Math Placement Criteria:

~~Auto-qualifying for Accelerated Math for Students entering Grades 5:~~

Students must meet all three categories listed in the chart below in order to be placed in 5th grade Accelerated Math.

Grades	STAR/MAP	CogAT
≥ 90% Average (Trimesters 1 and 2)	≥ 90% Average (Fall, Winter, and Spring)	≥ 120

~~Auto-qualifying from~~

Qualifications for Level Changes:

On-Level to Accelerated Math (Students entering Grades 6-8): Students in On-Level Math wishing to move to Accelerated Math must **first** meet the criteria of the first three categories listed below. ~~Those who meet the criteria will be invited to participate in Independent Summer Learning, which is a self-guided curriculum culminating in a corresponding summer assessment. Students who pass the summer assessment with a score of 88% or higher will be placed in Accelerated Math the following year.~~

Grades	STAR/MAP	CogAT
≥ 90% Average (Trimesters 1 and 2)	≥ 90% Average (Fall, Winter, and Spring)	≥ 120

In order to best support students through this process, identification will be made for students meeting the above criteria following the Winter MAP assessment. Students who meet the criteria will be invited to participate in a supported study group targeted to provide resources and materials to best prepare students for acceleration. The program will include: provided resources and learning materials; opportunities for weekly check-in with instructors; assessments to measure understanding of the new content; recommended learning timeline to best prepare for the transition. Based on student progress in the supported study group, Spring MAP and CoGAT assessments, and ongoing classroom grades, a determination will be made at the end of the school year to accelerate, continue in guided study throughout the summer, or maintain current level placement. Additional resources may be provided to students over the summer months to assist in the transition.

~~Auto-qualifying from Grade 6 Accelerated Math to 8th Grade Accelerated (Algebra):~~

Students currently enrolled in Grade 6 Accelerated Math who wish to move to Grade 8 Algebra must meet the criteria for the first three categories listed below. ~~Those who meet the~~

criteria will be invited to participate in Independent Summer Learning, which is a self-guided curriculum culminating in a corresponding summer assessment. Students who pass the summer assessment with a score of 88% or higher will be placed in accelerated the following year. **Students must have been enrolled in the Grade 6 Accelerated Math program in order to be considered for the Grade 8 Accelerated (Algebra) program.**

Grades	STAR/MAP	CogAT
≥ 95% Average (Trimesters 1 and 2)	≥ 95% Average (Fall, Winter, and Spring)	≥ 130

The same identification timeline and supports, as described above for level changes, will be provided to qualifying students.

Additional Placement Consideration:

Additional placement consideration will be given to students whose grades and assessment scores are approaching the identified qualification criteria. A determination for further review will be based on teacher recommendation and current class progress.

In addition to students who auto-qualify, students also have the opportunity to qualify for Summer Independent Study and its corresponding exam based on the school's compilation and sorting of student profiles*. Student profiles will be calculated and compiled based on the weighted percentages below and then sorted by achievement:

Math: Grades 4-8

Entering Grade	CogAT	STAR/MAP Math Scores	Math Grades
4	40%	40%	20%
5-8	35%	35%	30%

*Once sorted, the top 8-12% of the class will be invited to participate in Independent Summer Learning. Students who then pass the summer assessment with a score of 88% or higher will be placed in Accelerated Math the following year.

New Enrollments - Grades 5-8

Students new to the district will be evaluated using CogAT and STAR/MAP testing, though student records from previous schools will be considered. All students new to the district will be reviewed on an individual basis and assessed on the measures below for placement. Meeting the specified measures will qualify a student for placement into extended/accelerated classes. A writing sample (ELA) may also be requested.

Content Area	CogAT	STAR/MAP Scores	District Assessment
Math	≥ 120	$\geq 90\%$	$\geq 88\%$
ELA	≥ 120	$\geq 90\%$	N/A