

# **Weber Middle School**

## **Middle Level Math Acceleration Program**

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**Weber Middle School Mission Statement:**

Weber Middle School is a partnership that achieves academic excellence and demonstrates a commitment to social action. Parents, staff, and students share the responsibility of creating a respectful and nurturing environment that promotes individuality and celebrates diversity.

**Intermediate Level Science and Math Courses:**

The Intermediate-Level State Math Standards reflect the knowledge, skills, and understanding all students are expected to master and be able to demonstrate by the end of grade eight.

**Commencement Level Science and Math Courses:**

The Commencement Level NY State Math Standards reflect the knowledge, skills, and understanding all students are expected to master and be able to demonstrate upon receiving a high school diploma.

**The “7” Elements of an Effective Middle School:**

- a philosophy and mission that reflect the intellectual and developmental needs and characteristics of young adolescents
- an educational program that is comprehensive, challenging, purposeful, integrated, relevant, and standards-based
- an organization and structure that support both academic excellence and personal development
- classroom instruction appropriate to the needs and characteristics of young adolescents provided by skilled and knowledgeable teachers
- strong educational leadership and a building administration that encourages, facilitates, and sustains involvement, participation, and leadership
- a network of academic and personal support available for all students
- professional learning and staff development for all staff that are ongoing, planned, purposeful, and collaboratively developed

## Acceleration in the Middle School:

Middle level students progress through developmental stages. Those who demonstrate progress beyond their peers will be given the opportunity to pursue accelerated coursework. Accelerated academic courses are intended for highly motivated students.

Accelerated academic coursework provides instruction that is differentiated to provide increased rigor and challenge for highly motivated students while preserving and nurturing the joy of learning. Accelerated academic coursework moves at a faster pace and requires students to use higher level thinking skills. Accelerated coursework requires students to have a greater capacity to synthesize information, make generalizations, draw conclusions, understand abstract concepts, and learn at a rapid pace.

Students enrolled in accelerated courses are expected to meet the following criteria:

### LEARN

- abstract concepts
- content beyond the essential outcomes
- at a faster and more detailed pace
- independently and collaboratively
- through questioning, problem solving, investigating, and exploring

### MANAGE

- a more demanding workload
- multiple tasks
- above grade-level work

### DEMONSTRATE

- effective work and study habits
- responsibility and organization
- refined reading and writing abilities
- higher level thinking skills
- the ability to apply learned content to new situations
- initiative and motivation
- a high quality completion of assignments
- above average achievement throughout the course

## Math Acceleration in the Middle School

### **Entrance Criteria for 7<sup>th</sup> grade Accelerated Math:**

Four factors are used to evaluate the placement of a student into the Accelerated Math 7/8 course.

A student must take the qualifying exam to be considered for the course. A letter explaining the Accelerated Math 7/8 course, as well as the entrance criteria will be available online at: <https://www.portnet.org/site/Default.aspx?PageID=2013>

All students will be administered the qualifying exam unless parents choose to opt out of the process. This opt out form will be part of the letter noted above and must be given to the student's math teacher no later than the specified date on the informational letter sent home to the parents in March.

### **The entrance criteria will include the following four components:**

1. 6<sup>th</sup> grade math average quarter 1 -10%
2. 6<sup>th</sup> grade math average quarter 2 -25%
3. 6<sup>th</sup> grade math average quarter 3 -25%
4. Qualifying Exam -40%
  - a. Part I: General Math Knowledge
  - b. Part II: Problem Solving
  - c. Part III: Independent Learning
  - d. Part IV: Mathematical Competency

### **Qualification Score:**

A minimum average of 80% on the above criteria is required for automatic placement in the Accelerated Math 7/8 course in the middle school.

#### **If a student is a new entrant:**

The student will have his/her transcript evaluated by a member of the administrative team at Weber Middle School, a teacher, a school counselor, and the department chairperson/leader. The student is eligible to take the qualifying exam and follow the process outlined above.

#### **If a student is a new entrant without a transcript:**

The student is eligible to take the qualifying exam and will be evaluated on a case by case basis by a member of the administrative team at Weber Middle School, a teacher, a school counselor, and the department chairperson/leader.

**Appeals Framework and Process:**

Middle level placement decisions should be based on an individual student's academic, social, and emotional well being. Factors such as maturity, anxiety level, sports and music commitments, membership in co-curricular activities, and outside obligations greatly impact the level of success attainable by middle school students in the Accelerated Math 7/8 program. Parents and students should carefully consider these factors in their decision to pursue this accelerated course.

Students who are unable to keep up with the challenge and rigor of the course may need to be rescheduled to the grade level math course. Changes in a student's schedule are disruptive to his/her educational process. This schedule change could result in the change of a math teacher.

If a student does not meet the minimum matrix score of 80% and should they choose to appeal the process, the following steps below must be followed in the order listed:

1. parent contacts the student's 6<sup>th</sup> grade math teacher
2. the student's teacher then contacts the student's school counselor

After the parent has contacted the student's 6<sup>th</sup> grade math teacher, a written appeals document must be submitted to the building principal explaining the student's extenuating circumstances. This document should contain the reasons an appeal is being requested.

Once the principal has received the appeals letter, then an appeals committee, consisting of a member of the administrative team at Weber Middle School, a teacher, a school counselor, the department chairperson/leader, and the committee chairperson will hear the student's case. The student's identity will be kept anonymous. The members of the committee will come to a decision based upon the documentation that has been presented. The student's parent(s) will be informed in a timely manner by the committee chairperson.

**Criteria to Remain in the Course:**

It is strongly suggested that a student maintains a minimum average of a 'C+' in his/her Accelerated Math 7/8 coursework first quarter. Thereafter, it is suggested that a student maintain a minimum average of "B" in his/her Accelerated Math 7/8 coursework by the end of each quarter. Parents, teachers, and students share in the responsibility of maintaining an accurate record of academic progress throughout each quarter. If a student's quarterly grade falls below the minimum recommended average,

and the decision is made to remain in the course, then the student and parent must sign a form acknowledging that the student's grade has fallen below the suggested average. If a student is in danger of falling below the minimum average, the following steps will be taken in the order listed below:

1. The teacher will contact the student's parent/guardian.
2. The teacher will contact the student's school counselor.
3. A mid-quarter progress report will be sent home.
4. Articulation will take place among parent, team and school counselor.

**Entrance Criteria for Commencement Level Math in Middle School:**

To be enrolled in the Commencement Level Math course, *Algebra I (Common Core)* offered at the middle school a student must have completed Accelerated Math 7/8 or the student must meet the following criteria:

1. The student must have shown mastery of the 7<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum. Mastery is defined as an A+ average in quarters 1, 2, and 3 in Math 7.

If both of the above criteria are met, the process will continue as outlined below:

1. An articulation meeting will be held with the student, parent/guardian, student's school counselor, 7<sup>th</sup> grade math teacher, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade math teacher.
2. A copy of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade NYS Math Curriculum will be distributed to the student at the beginning of the fourth quarter. It will become the responsibility of the student to review/learn the content independently.
3. The student will be administered an 8<sup>th</sup> grade assessment in June on which he/she must earn a score of 85% (mastery level).

**If a student is a new entrant:**

The student will have his/her transcript evaluated by a member of the administrative team at Weber Middle School, a teacher, a school counselor, and the department chairperson/leader. The student may then opt to take the qualifying exam and follow the process outlined above.

Middle level placement decisions should be based on an individual student's academic, social, and emotional well being. Factors such as maturity, anxiety level, effect of double acceleration, sports and music commitments, membership in co-curricular activities, and outside obligations greatly impact the level of success attainable by middle school students in the commencement level math program. Parents and students should carefully consider these factors in their decision to pursue a commencement level course.

Students who are unable to keep up with the challenge and rigor of the course may need to be rescheduled to the grade level math course. Changes in a student's schedule can be disruptive to his/her educational process. It is very likely that if a student is scheduled out of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Commencement Level math course that other changes to his/her schedule may be made as well. These schedule changes could result in the

following: change of math teacher, change of science teacher, and/or change in core class grouping, including off house placement.

### **Criteria to Remain in the Course:**

It is *strongly suggested* that a student maintains a *minimum* quarterly average of a 'B' in his/her Commencement Level coursework. Parents, teachers, and students share in the responsibility of maintaining an accurate record of academic progress throughout each quarter. If a student's quarterly grade falls below the minimum recommended average, and the decision is made to remain in the course, then the student and parent must sign a form acknowledging that the student's average will be a part of his/her **permanent high school transcript**.

If the decision is made to reschedule a student into the grade level course, such a request must be made in writing and presented to the student's school counselor no later than **February 15<sup>th</sup>**. After that date no student will be rescheduled.

### **Awarding Credit for Commencement Level Courses in Math completed in the Middle School:**

Commencement level courses completed in the middle school will become a part of the student's high school transcript. The courses that culminate in a New York State Regents exam at the middle school are not weighted on the student's high school transcript, as they are not Honors courses and do not exceed the New York State Regents Course Syllabus. The student's final year average (all four quarters of the course and the score earned on the Regents Exam), and the score earned on the Regents Exam will become a part of the student's permanent high school transcript. Successful completion of the course and passing of the Algebra I (Common Core) Regents Exam earns one high school credit in mathematics.

### **Double Skip:**

In **rare** instances, entering 6<sup>th</sup> graders who have been identified by the elementary math resource teacher, the PEP teacher, and/or the fifth grade teacher as possessing a unique depth of mathematical knowledge and maturity will be given the opportunity to be screened for the Accelerated Math 7/8 program. After discussion at the elementary level such notification should be brought to the attention of Middle School Math Department Chairperson and Principal no later than June 15<sup>th</sup>. The screening exam will take place at a specified date before the start of the next school year. A candidate for such a **rare** instance of double skip should have a NWEA Math RIT percentile between 97-99 in the Fall and Spring screenings in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. New entrants to the district will also be eligible for this screening. Upon completion of the testing and discussion with the parents, a committee of math teachers, school counselors, administrators and the department leader will review all the student's credentials. Parents will be informed of the decision. Explanation of the future ramifications of the possible move will clearly be explained to the parents before any move is made. Placement in this program will have an impact on the student's schedule.

# Forms

**WEBER MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
**QUALIFYING EXAM OPT-OUT FORM**  
**Accelerated Math 7/8**

**I do not want my child \_\_\_\_\_ to participate in the qualifying exam for *Accelerated Math 7/8* course offered in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade.**

**Please return this form to your child's MATH TEACHER no later than the specified date on the informational letter sent home to the parents in March.**

**Student's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**House (circle)    Blue    Green    Red    Yellow**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent/Guardian Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

