



Scottsdale Unified School District  
7575 E. Main Street  
Scottsdale, Arizona 85251

March 1, 2016

SUSD Families of Students in Grades 5, 6, and 7:

In an effort to ensure the most appropriate placement in math for students each year, all 5th, 6th and 7th grade students in SUSD will have the opportunity to take a diagnostic placement test this spring. The results of this test will be used as one indicator to recommend the most appropriate math course for your child *next* year.

The diagnostic assessments are short, 30-question multiple choice tests that students should be able to complete, as best they can, in one class period. The tests used are aptitude tests, designed to test a student's readiness to think conceptually about math two grade levels beyond their current math placement. By using the tests as one of the main indicators to recommend math placement the following year, we are hopeful we are identifying students who are indeed ready for more complex concepts and not just those who demonstrate a strong understanding of current grade level math standards.

Please inform your child that this short test is just one tool we are using to recommend appropriate math courses for next year. Other indicators include teachers' assessments of work habits, as well as previous benchmark and AzMERIT results. Together, these indicators are totaled in a matrix, and combined scores within the matrix are used to recommend the most appropriate math course to ensure your student's success next year. In early June, parents will receive an email with directions on how to view the placement for their student in math for the following school year. Students' schedules will reflect these thoughtful recommendations in the fall.

We know that students are more successful in all mathematics if they have a solid understanding of the standards in all math course prerequisites. Thus, decisions about recommending acceleration in math courses at the middle level are made very thoughtfully and in the best interest of students. It is important to note that the rigor expected in the Arizona College and Career Ready standards for mathematics and the instructional materials in all K-8 math classes promote a deeper understanding of math for all of our students, regardless of the math class in which they are placed. Leading educators in math now suggest that only 10-15% of students benefit from acceleration in math during the middle years, given the complexity of standards at these levels.

It is important that parents and students understand that we allow opportunities to assess students' performance using a similar process each spring in grades 5, 6 and 7 to identify students who may benefit from a more appropriate math placement the following year. SUSD recognizes that students progress and mature at their own pace and prides itself in providing engaging and rigorous learning opportunities for all students.

For more information about student readiness indicators and math placement processes at the middle level in SUSD, please refer to the FAQ for parents in the Information Backpack, on the SUSD website.

We look forward to helping your student reach his/her full potential in math.

Sincerely,

Diane Whitmore, Ed.D.  
Director of Curriculum and Professional Development