



ALGEBRA 2 PREREQUISITE NOTICE

*This notice is for all Algebra 1 students and their parents and Algebra 1 teachers
February 2008*

In 2003-2004, Algebra 1 became a mandatory course for all California students to obtain a high school diploma. This requirement was established due a related new requirement for students to pass the California High School Exit Exam. The Murrieta Valley Unified School District mathematics staff and administration have been gathering data the past years in determining the effects of these requirements on the academic success for students in Algebra 1 and Algebra 2. Our reasons for studying these data included:

- Mathematics is commonly referred to as the gateway subject into college and Algebra 1 success is critical
- A high school diploma also requires 3 years of mathematics. Students are likely to follow Algebra 1 with Geometry and Algebra 2
- Success in Algebra 2 is possible only when a student has a solid foundation in Algebra 1

As a result of our 3 year study, we have concluded that it is critical that students enrolling in Algebra 2 must have a strong foundation in Algebra 1 in order to insure success and remain in strong academic standing for college.

Beginning spring 2008, students in grades 8 and 9 who are taking Algebra 1 must pass the California Standards Test in Algebra 1 with a minimum scale score of 350 (minimally proficient) as a prerequisite into Algebra 2, which is taken after Geometry.

Students scoring below 350 must retake Algebra 1 prior to enrolling in Algebra 2.

If the student does not score minimally proficient (minimum score of 350) on the CST Algebra 1 a second time, the student may still enroll in Algebra 2 after completion of Geometry.

The following are questions and answers regarding this new proficiency prerequisite for Algebra 2:

Question: Are there exceptions to students having to show proficiency in Algebra 1 before they can move to the next level?

Answer: Students with Individual Education Plans (IEP) are not necessarily exempt from the requirement, but ultimately placement into educational programs for special education students is a function of the IEP team.

Question: What about a student who gets A's in class and has also scored high on class exams and final exams, but has a bad test day when the Algebra 1 California Standards Test is given?

Answer: Parents who are certain that their student is proficient in Algebra 1 may appeal to the high school principal for additional assessments. This appeal must occur prior to the start of the school year so that all assessments given are completed before class begins. The school reserves the right to determine the test to be used and will select items from standards based assessments in Algebra 1. Passing rates on the appeals will be set at a minimum level of 80%.

Question: Will a second year of Algebra 1 in high school count towards graduation even if my child passed the first year but was required to retake Algebra 1?

Answer: Yes. A student may take 2 years of Algebra 1 and then a third year of any math class to satisfy the District three-year math requirement. The second year of Algebra 1 will be listed under a different course number to avoid transcript confusion. (Note: this question is not relevant to in-coming students from grade 8 who retake Algebra 1 in grade 9. The 3 year math credit requirement does not include math courses taken in grade 8)

Question: If my child retakes Algebra 1, won't it hurt his/her chances of getting into college?

Answer: No. It is more likely that a student who does not have the foundational skills in Algebra 1 will do poorly in Algebra 2. Failure in Algebra 2 will keep a student out of college unless the student retakes and passes Algebra 2. Also, the student may not have the necessary skills to score well on the college math placement test which results in students retaking Algebra 1 in college.

The high school mathematics pathway for a college bound student who must retake Algebra 1 in grade 9 would follow the traditional path of Algebra 1, Geometry, and Algebra 2 and still leave room for advanced math such as Pre-calculus. A student who takes Algebra 1 in grade 9 and retakes in grade 10 will still have time to complete the traditional college requirements of Geometry in grade 11 and Algebra 2 in grade 12.

As we implement this new prerequisite requirement for Algebra 1, we will closely analyze data and track student progress. If you do have any questions, feel free to contact your high school administrative team.

Thank you,

Guy Romero
Assistant Superintendent
Educational Services
Murrieta Valley USD