



2017-18 MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSE AND SECTION PLACEMENT CRITERIA

The Huntington Beach City School District uses multiple measures to determine the appropriate course and section placement for middle school students in CORE and Mathematics. The purpose of the criteria is to ensure that placements are based on the best available information about a student’s skills relative to the curricular challenges they will encounter in the coming year. Students have many diverse gifts that are best cultivated through proper placement, allowing teachers to differentiate instruction for the learners in their classroom.

A representative group of Math and CORE teachers at both middle schools collaborated with district administrators and fifth-grade colleagues to determine criteria that place students in courses that offer suitable levels of rigor. These criteria include local, state, and national measures as well as teacher recommendations based on student abilities by subject area. All placements are made on a provisional basis and review of a student’s placement may be warranted on a case-by-case basis; please see a companion document, “Middle School Placement Criteria Frequently Asked Questions” for further information about the placement process and contact your site administrators regarding a placement review. Students’ placement recommendations will also be reviewed annually. Please contact your school administrators or the District Office at (714) 378-2034 should you have any questions about this document.

CORE

HBCSD recognizes the importance of appropriate English Language Arts and History course placement for students during their middle school educational experience. This content is delivered in the double-block CORE course at the middle school level. To qualify for the Honors level of grade-level CORE classes, students must meet certain criteria that indicate giftedness specifically in language arts and literacy. These courses include added rigor, including further vocabulary development and exposure to literature. Students who receive **10 points** based on the following criteria will receive the District recommendation for Honors CORE placement at their grade level:

- **Smarter Balanced Assessment English Language Arts score (SBAC):**
 Nearly or Has Not Met = 0 pts Standard Met = 2 pts Standard Exceeded = 3 pts
- **SBAC Reading Claim Score:**
 Below Standard = 0 pts At/Near Standard = 4 pts Above Standard = 6 pts
- **Scholastic Reading Inventory Lexile Score:**
 Between mean and one standard deviation above the mean = 1 pt
 At least ONE standard deviation above the mean = 2 pts
 At least TWO standard deviations above the mean = 3 pts
- **End of Year Language Arts Classroom Grade:** D/F* = -1 pts B/C = 0 pts A = 1 pt

Our teacher committee identified reading skills as the most critical for success in a differentiated Honors CORE course. Students must have an advanced ability to dissect and comprehend complex texts in order to meaningfully engage in a more-rigorous literacy course. The SRI Lexile scores and Reading Claim from the SBAC assessment have been included as criteria in this system to reflect this emphasis on reading skills. The Lexile reader measure is a nationally normed assessment that has proven to be a strong indicator of student reading levels; the scale of the measure is based on a student’s ability to comprehend a variety of text elements and provides teachers with a predictability to the levels of text students will understand. Other assessments, including the District Benchmarks and Articulated Writing Prompt, will be used as validating data measures as well as additional criteria in cases where more data is needed to make a placement recommendation.

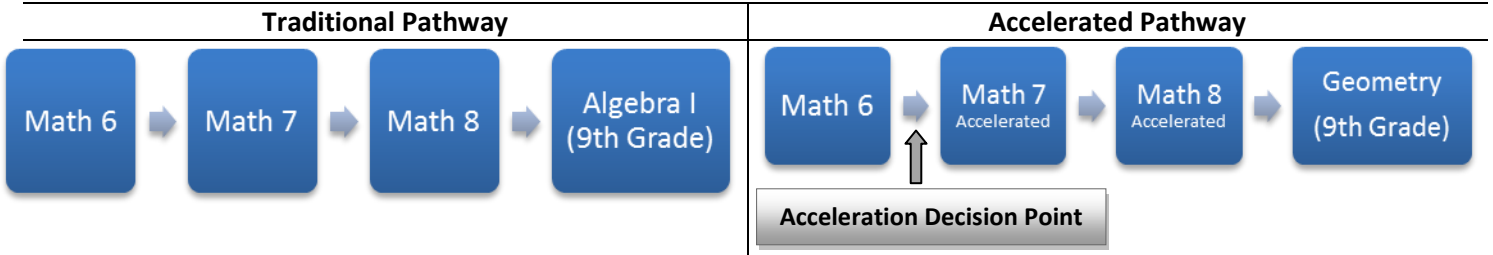
*Students who receive a D/F on their final Language Arts Grade will have placement reviewed during first progress reports.



Curriculum and Instruction

Mathematics

Students will be adequately prepared for high school success with completion of the Common Core-aligned Mathematics 6, 7, and 8 courses or with the Accelerated Pathway. These pathways, illustrated below, are in alignment with the California Department of Education Mathematics Framework (Appendix D).



All sixth grade students will be placed in the Mathematics 6 course; students will be grouped in sections to support teachers in determining the depth of content instruction to best meet student learning needs. Data analysis and teacher recommendation are used to place students, requiring **5 points** to be earned within a system of criteria for consideration on the Accelerated Pathway. The measures used are:

- **Smarter Balanced Assessment Mathematics scale score (SBAC):**
 Between mean and one standard deviation above the mean = 1 pt
 At least ONE standard deviation above the mean = 2 pts
 At least TWO standard deviations above the mean = 3 pts
- **Key Skills from Summative Assessment:**
 70-79% = 1 pt 79-88% = 2 pts 90+% = 3 pts
- **Classroom Teacher Recommendation:**
 Recommendation = 1 pt
 Strong Recommendation = 2 pt

The California Math Frameworks specify that the Common Core Math 8 standards are of significantly higher rigor than the previous Algebra I course that many students took while in 8th grade. Students go further in-depth with their studies of linear relationships and equations in addition to exploring irrational numbers and a more formal treatment of functions. The new Algebra I and Geometry courses are correspondingly more advanced than previous courses, requiring recalibration of course sequencing to ensure students are able to master the necessary content.

As such, the State has recommended compacting three years of material into two years rather than two years into one. Our teachers have worked to create Standards Sequence Schedules that have combined Math 7 and Math 8 content into the Math 7 Accelerated course; similarly, Math 8 and Algebra I content has been combined for Math 8 Accelerated, preparing students for Geometry at the high school. The rationale for this pathway design primarily stems from the likelihood that mathematical concepts are likely to be omitted when trying to squeeze two years into one, which must be avoided as the new standards have been developed to carefully define clear learning progressions as students prepare for high school coursework and recently updated college entrance exams.