

DRIVER MIDDLE SCHOOL

Marcellus Central School District

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Dedicated and Motivated to Succeed

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Dear Sixth Grade Student and Parent,

When your child enters seventh grade there will be many opportunities to try new things. One of the opportunities is course acceleration in Mathematics. A student who accelerates in math will essentially move through math at a faster rate. This is an opportunity for students who excel in math, enjoy math, can move at a faster pace in math and want to be challenged in math. It is not a "requirement" or "need to do" opportunity. Acceleration is not for all students and does not make a difference in the type of rigorous, well-rounded, preparatory program students can do in high school.

Below is a representation of the steps we go through to provide math acceleration:



We do an extensive review of data that generally allows us to predict student success. Students selected for acceleration are encouraged to maintain an average above 85 throughout the year. An average of 85 is typically referred to as mastery. Demonstrating mastery indicates that students have a solid understanding of math concepts and can be successful moving through the math program at an accelerated rate.

If students are not selected for the accelerated math going into 7th grade, there is another window of opportunity for students while in 7th grade and/or moving into 8th grade.



If a 6th grade student feels he/she is not quite ready for acceleration or does not meet the above criteria, he/she can choose to wait until the end of 7th grade. The opportunity to accelerate at the end of 7th grade will be afforded to those students who demonstrate strong skills and high academic performance in 7th grade math and meet the criteria developed for consideration at that time.

When considering acceleration please keep in mind the following:

- Students do not need to be accelerated to benefit from a solid, well-rounded HS program and be prepared for any college or career he/she may select.
- Students who accelerate should demonstrate exceptional strength in the content area and a desire to be challenged above and beyond.
- The accelerated math curriculum moves very quickly and expects students to perform at a faster pace with higher quality work. The curriculum is identical to the typical 7-8 math curriculum, it just moves at a faster pace in 7th grade so that students can take 9th grade Regents level math (Algebra I) in 8th grade.
- The grades a student receives in Algebra I as an 8th grade student will appear on the student's HS transcript, as will the grade he/she receives on the Regents exam taken at the end of the year.
- 7th grade is different than 6th grade. Students will be facing many changes and might want or need an opportunity to adjust without the added pressures of acceleration.
- Waiting until the end of 7th grade will not affect the end result and purpose of acceleration, which is to have the flexibility to take 5 years of high school math and to take math at a more challenging pace.

We are asking that you discuss this information and opportunity with your child. If you are uncertain about what choice to make or you need further information or clarification, please contact us so that we may discuss it further. It is our wish to have every parent/child complete the enclosed response form and return it to his/her homeroom teacher by Friday, February 15th. The prognosis test will be given the week of February 25th to those students who return their form indicating they want to be considered. Please understand that your choice to enter the process does not guarantee placement into the accelerated program, it simply informs us that your child wants to take the prognosis test, have his/her data reviewed and be considered for placement and opens up the communication we will have to make decisions together about what is best for your child.

I want to reiterate, there is no "down-side" to taking the typical progression of course work in middle school and in high school. Our curriculum provides students with opportunities to demonstrate strong academic, social and personal character to prepare each and every child for life after high school, regardless of the program students select. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Janet O'Mara
Principal