



Math Pathways

FAQs

Families frequently have questions about the middle and high school course sequence when making a choice regarding their child's math courses. The purpose of this document is to help parents understand the various math pathways, assist students in making the most appropriate placement to be successful mathematicians, and clarify some misconceptions.

What are the various math pathways available to my child between fifth grade and graduation?

Grade	Typical Grade Level Math Progression	Single Accelerated Math Progression	Double Accelerated Math Progression*
5	Fifth Grade Common Core Standards	Fifth Accelerated - Sixth Grade Common Core Standards	Seventh Grade Common Core Standards
6	Sixth Grade - Sixth Grade Common Core Standards	Sixth Accelerated - Seventh Grade Common Core Standards	Pre-Algebra
7	Seventh Grade - Seventh Grade Common Core Standards	Pre-Algebra	Algebra I
8	Pre-Algebra	Algebra I	Geometry
9	Algebra I	Geometry	Algebra II
10	Geometry	Algebra II	Pre-Calculus
11	Algebra II	Pre-Calculus	AP Calculus
12**	Pre-Calculus or AP Statistics	Calculus (AP or Intro)	Advanced Calculus or AP Statistics

Honors and grade level courses exist for Geometry, Algebra II, and Pre-Calculus.

* Double acceleration options are rare and typically happen between fifth and sixth grade.

** If Algebra II is completed in the Junior year, Senior level math can be met in a variety of ways that include:

- Completing an advanced level math course (pre-calculus, math analysis, calculus)
- Completing a math-based quantitative course (statistics)
- Completing an algebra-based science course (chemistry, physics)
- Completing an AP Computer Science course

How do I know what math class would be best for my child in fifth grade?

Students and families should consider various data points when selecting the appropriate math pathway. The District believes that the following criterion are indicators of a student suited for acceleration in fifth grade:

1. Level 4 on the fourth grade SBA (state math assessment);
2. Consistent achievement of 3.5s or 4s on the math report card;
3. Strong work habits and study skills;
4. View math challenges as fun and interesting;
5. Embrace a faster paced learning environment; and
6. Desire to be in the accelerated class.

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Math Pathways FAQs *continued...*

Students and families should not consider math acceleration if the student is already receiving outside math tutoring or rely on consistent teacher/para/parent help. Additionally, students and families should not go into math acceleration with the mindset that tutoring is an option if the student struggles. We want to develop strong mathematical thinkers. This can happen for students who take the standard pathway as well as the accelerated pathway.

If a student does not accelerate between fourth and fifth grade, can the student accelerate between fifth and sixth?

Yes, in fact, students can accelerate even in high school. Many students stay in fifth grade math, strengthen their foundation, and then accelerate in middle school or beyond. There is a process to nominate your child for acceleration. More information is available at www.mercerislandschools.org/am. You are encouraged to speak to your child's current math teacher and/or academic counselor about your interest in accelerating.

What is covered in Accelerated Math classes?

All courses are built around [Common Core State Standards](#) (CCSS). Fifth grade Accelerated Math covers sixth grade CCSS math standards. Sixth grade Accelerated Math covers seventh grade CCSS math standards. This pattern continues for the remainder of the math progression.

If a student chooses an accelerated path and the class is not a good fit, can the student move to a more appropriate class?

Yes, the school and district will work with any family or student who feels that the accelerated track is not appropriate. This can take place either at a trimester break or the end of the year. If the decision is made at the end of the year the student simply repeats the same math level. This is not looked upon as a failure on the student's part.

Can a student earn high school credit by taking certain classes in middle school?

A student can earn high school credit by taking an approved high school level course during middle school. For example, students who complete the equivalent Algebra 1 can have this course, grade and credit added to their high school transcripts. It is important that before adding these grades/credits to their high school transcripts that students consult with their high school counselor.

How many math credits/courses does a student need to graduate high school?

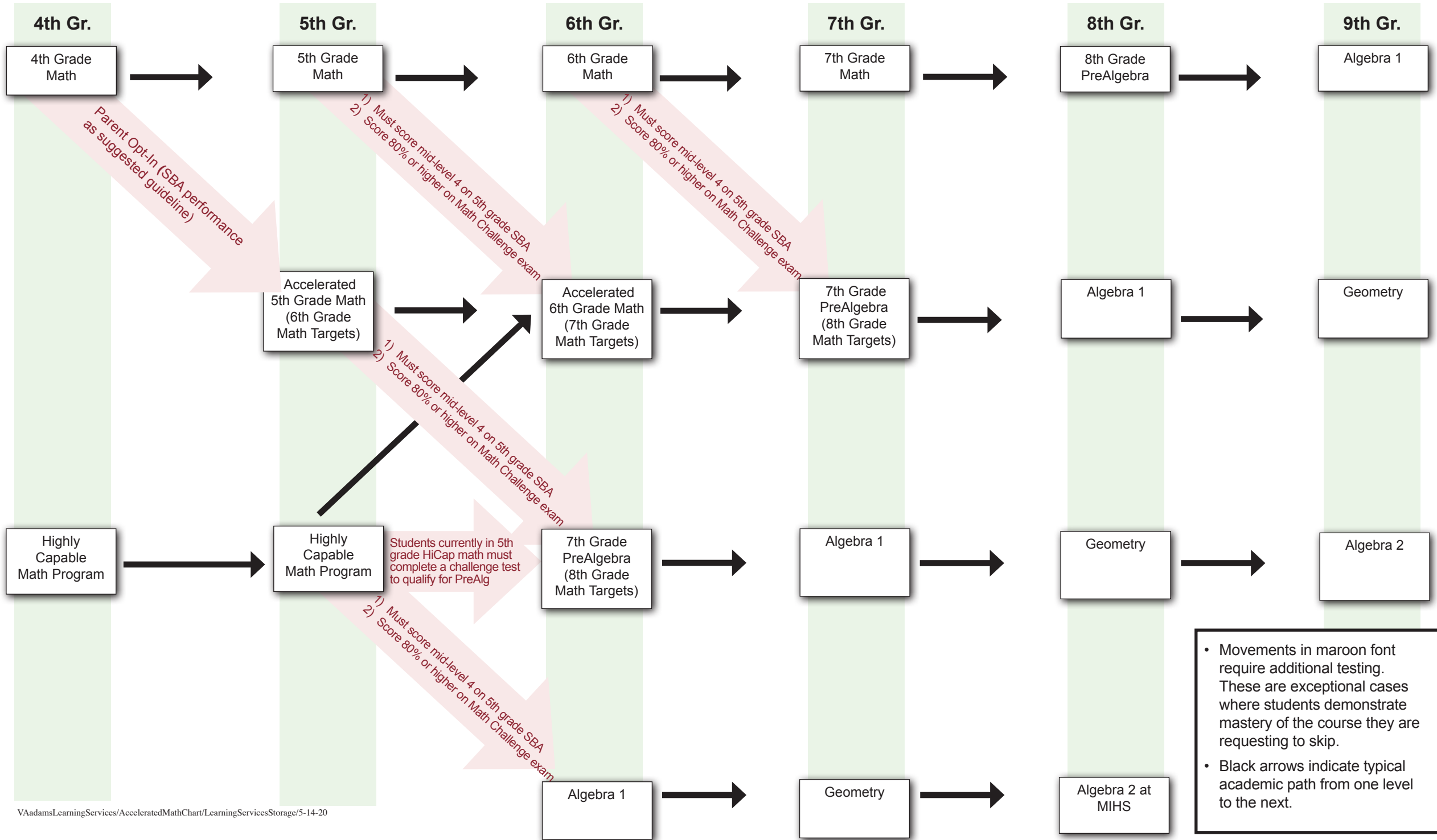
To graduate from high school, students must complete at least three (3) years of math courses through Algebra 2 (or an approved equivalent).

What do colleges and universities look for on a high school transcript?

As you think to your child's future, know that some colleges require three years of math. Many four-year colleges, including all Washington state colleges, require four (4) years of math through Algebra II. Highly selective 4-year colleges require four (4) years of math through varying courses, some beyond Algebra II. It is always important to check the specific requirements for each college to which a student is considering.

Can I take a math class outside of MIHS to accelerate in math?

Yes, students can take courses outside of MIHS that would then allow them to accelerate. The course must be a high school credit course (not, for example, a summer stretch program or tutoring). In order for the course to be accepted, students must complete a *Student Request for Course Credit Toward Graduation from Institutions Other Than MIHS Form* prior to enrolling in the course. The form is located in Administrative and Board Policies on our website at mercerislandschools.org/2414F



- Movements in maroon font require additional testing. These are exceptional cases where students demonstrate mastery of the course they are requesting to skip.
- Black arrows indicate typical academic path from one level to the next.