Algebra Parent Night Meeting Notes

9/16/2014

1. **Discussion of the Math Articulation Process**

* IM7 students are generally better prepared for the Algebra 2.0 curriculum and the different teaching style the new course stresses
* Math 7 students entering Algebra 2.0 without having taken IM7 are missing some important skills such as Patterns and Functions, Solving Equations, and Rates of Change. These were significant components of Algebra curriculum and were a focus in IM7
* Algebra 2.0 rollout was new last year and this year’s struggles are similar to the ones student encountered last year
* The current 8th graders will be introduced to a new math curriculum for the next several years as MCPS rolls out Geometry 2.0, Algebra II 2.0, Precalculus 2.0
* An IM 7 class has been created to accommodate the seventh grade students (who took math 7 last year) that would like to switch from Algebra

1. **Algebra 1.0 vs. Algebra 2.0**

* One of the major differences between the old and new curriculum is the focus on the “How?” and “Why?” students arrived at an answer and not simply if the answer is correct. The move to requiring a student to explain how they arrived at their answer or to justify their answer is a difficult transition and leads to frustration
* This new approach to teaching and learning is part of the Common Core and it is closely connected to the type of assessment questions students will see on tests such as the PARCC and the SAT
* This novel approach brings with a new teaching style which incorporates student to student conversations and more Socratic style questioning

1. **Course Expectations**

* Middle school students must pass the final exam to receive high school credit for Algebra
* A “z” in grade book means work has not been turned in but will still be accepted
* Homework will be given almost every night
* Homework accounts for 10% of the course grade
* Homework completion is verified every day at start of class while students are completing warm-up
* Homework is reviewed each day as a whole group activity
* Students may receive partial credit for their answer. Showing your work is therefore essential
* The Algebra course is a high school credit bearing class and the expectation is that students will be proactive and seek out help
* Resources such as links to websites and videos are posted on Edline

1. **Supports Available**

* **AFTER SCHOOL**-Starting Wednesday, September 17th and continuing every Wednesday for the rest of the school year, there will be an Algebra Support Club from 3-4pm. Students will receive direct instruction on specific topics the instructors have determined to be areas of need. Students and families will be provided the topic for the upcoming session at the beginning of the week. Notice of the week’s topic will be posted on Edline as well as shared in class. Students will need to sign up for the Support Club during their lunch period. This is not meant to be a homework club. Students can attend as often as needed. Parents and teachers may also request their child attend and should contact the teacher if necessary
* **IN CLASS-**The Algebra classes have one lead teacher and a math support teacher. This is a unique situation in MCPS and not available in other middle schools. The ability to have a second set of eyes and ears has provided students the opportunity to receive direct and individual instruction/feedback in almost every class
* **LUNCH TIME**-Teachers are all available during the lunch block. Students need to get a pass in advance from Ms. Cooper, Ms. Libby or Mr. Hwang in order to exit the cafeteria
* **AT HOME**- Use the Flexbook and web links provided that support that day’s lesson. To access Flexbook and related on-line supports sign on to Edline then go to Algebra and then to Links.
* **DURING THE DAY**-The advisory period is also available for students needing help. Students must get a pass the day before. This support is available for students with all of their classes and is not specific to just Algebra students.

1. **Parent Questions**
2. *If my child comes home and still “doesn’t get it” what should s/he do?*

Use the Flexbook and web links provided that support that day’s lesson. Your child should do their best to complete the homework and come to class with questions. Homework completion is verified every class during the warm up portion of the lesson.

1. *Do the students have the requisite skills to work in groups and answer the Common core type questions?*

The teachers are emphasizing skill based instruction with warm-ups, exit tickets and direct instruction on a daily basis.

1. *If my child took IM 7 are they prepared for the Algebra 2.0 curriculum?*

We believe that the IM 7 curriculum is a good preparation for Algebra 1 and that all students will demonstrate success on some topics and find others more challenging.

1. *What happens during the lunch time help sessions?*

Some students are coming in for reteaching, some to retake an assessment, others are asking for help on particular problems, and some are doing homework.

1. *Are students allowed to retake the county formatives?*

No. County formatives cannot be retaken. However, if the teacher does not feel that the overall results are satisfactory we will make every effort to reteach and reassess using a teacher generated assessment.

1. *How much advance notice will be given before administering a formative assessment or test?*

Generally a week or so in advance. The dates for the semester and final Algebra exams are provided in the course syllabus/outline.

1. *In the future will there be a review sheet for the tests?*

Based on the response from the parents tonight it is evident a more clear review sheet would be helpful. Moving forward there will be a review sheet for formatives. The test review will also be posted on Edline to help facilitate parents helping their child in preparing for a test. All county semester and final exams have a review sheet that has already been created.

1. *What will the Wednesday after School Tutorial look like?*

The focus will be on teaching specific skills. The teachers, using current data, will determine what the areas of need are and provide guided instruction in these afternoon tutorial sessions. The topics for the Wednesday sessions will be posted on Edline at the beginning of the week. Students will need to sign up during their lunch period prior to Wednesday. Students may come as often as needed. Students may be requested to attend the tutorial by their teachers.

1. *What happens if child does not pass Algebra in the 8th grade?*

Students who are enrolled in Algebra I when entering Magruder High School in the 9th grade will likely follow this course sequence: 9th grade Algebra, 10th grade Geometry, 11th grade Algebra II, 12th grade AP Statistics or Precalculus or another mathematics electives. Also a student who is enrolled in Algebra I in the 9th grade at Magruder is eligible for the Finance and Engineering Academies.

1. *When is the deadline to drop the Algebra class?*

There is no deadline for dropping a course in middle school. At the end of the first semester a student that is not being successful will be encouraged to withdraw from the course

1. *Where are the Algebra resources located?*

We have placed everything on Edline. Also, the school’s website under “Academics” and “Math” will have the information distributed tonight as well as links to other related information.