

CALIFORNIA CONNECTIONS ACADEMY SCHOOLS

MATHEMATICS PLACEMENT POLICY

**Originally approved on September 27, 2016 and on October 25, 2016.
Revisions approved on September 24, 2019 and June 23, 2020
By Board of Directors, California Online Public Schools**

BACKGROUND

The California legislature passed SB 359, the California Mathematics Placement Act of 2015. The new law requires Local Educational Agencies, including charter schools, to have a board approved placement policy for mathematics for 9th grade students in place beginning with the 2016-17 school year. The intention of the state is to ensure that all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, or socioeconomic background, have an equal chance to advance in mathematics, and to increase the number of students prepared to enter college and careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). In particular, a student's 9th grade math course placement is a crucial crossroads for his or her future educational success. Misplacement in the sequence of mathematics courses can create a number of barriers and results in pupils being less competitive for college admissions. A fair, objective and transparent policy on 9th grade math placement may help reduce misplacement of students into the appropriate math course as they enter high school.

The mission of California Connections Academy is to educate to empower compassionate global citizens by leveraging 21st century education resources on behalf of students who need a more personalized approach to learning to maximize these students' potential and meet the highest performance standards.

This mission is supported by providing a personalized placement in math courses for all California Connections Academy students, along with follow up monitoring of student success, in order to customize the student's educational plan to best meet the academic needs and educational goals of each student. California Connections Academy Schools serve a diverse population of students from many different backgrounds, and through the Personalized Performance Learning approach, the schools can support every student in achieving his or her academic potential, across all demographic groups. In the virtual

school environment, students are often able to accelerate academically, and/or to work on academic content until mastery is achieved without facing many of the barriers that can be found in a traditional brick and mortar school setting.

California Connections Academy Schools are actively engaged in improving math performance in all grade levels. Progress can be monitored through the goals set in the Local Control and Accountability Plans (found on each school's website) and the annual School Improvement Plan.

MATHEMATICS PLACEMENT

Math placement decisions are made by the school's counseling and advisory staff. The standard math placement sequence is reviewed annually by the Director of Counseling, in consultation with the school's Administrative Leadership Team. School staff may also be supported by designated and trained placement staff from Connections Education.

While the school counseling and advisory staff are primarily responsible for making math placement decisions, parents and students play a key role in the final decision. Families can make a request for a particular math placement during the enrollment or re-enrollment process. Families have access to a placement chart that lays out the standard progression of math courses through the "student course selection" process in Connexus.

The counseling staff members take into account multiple measures to determine the math course placement that will lead to the greatest student success for each student. Multiple objective academic measures of student performance are the most important indicators taken into consideration. These include student transcripts, past grades and report cards, performance in the previous math course, results of the statewide mathematics assessments, including interim and/or summative assessments as available, results of gifted and talented testing, and placement tests that are aligned to state-adopted content standards in mathematics. In addition to the objective academic measures, the recommendation of the parent(s) and, if the student was a California Connections Academy student previously, the student's math teacher, are taken into consideration. For students with an active Individualized Education Program (IEP), the goals and progress of the IEP are taken into consideration.

The following guidelines are used when making math placement decisions for 9th grade students:

- ✓ Students entering 9th grade who have successfully completed a level of math of Geometry or above are placed into the next level math course.
- ✓ Students who have successfully completed the high school Algebra I requirement prior to 9th grade are placed into Geometry or higher.
- ✓ Students who enter 9th grade with a C or better in 8th grade math or Pre-Algebra or Algebra Readiness are placed in Algebra I.
- ✓ Students who enter 9th grade having already failed Algebra I, or who received a grade lower than a C in Pre-Algebra or Math 8 or Algebra Readiness, are placed into a slower paced Algebra I course that is divided into Part 1 and Part 2.
- ✓ Students who were in a non-traditional educational setting prior to entering 9th grade may use the alternative evaluation procedures laid out in the School Handbook.

ACCOUNTABILITY

In order to provide a transparent policy regarding Mathematics placement, the board approved policy will be posted on the schools' websites under the "Public Notices" section.

Students and parents have the right to timely recourse if they do not agree with the school's math placement decision in accordance with the policies laid out in the School Handbook. The first step in this process is contacting the student's counselor to discuss the placement decision.

The schools will monitor the success of the placement policy by reviewing math placement at the end of the first month of school each year. Placement will be re-evaluated using student success data. Students who are struggling will be given various academic interventions and supports. Students who appear to have mastered the material in a course may be considered for acceleration with the approval of their counselor.

Annually, each school will prepare a report of the math placements for the past year's 9th grade students, which includes the students' demographic information. This report will be presented to the Boards of Directors in a public meeting.