

Lewis Center for Educational Research

BP 6191 INSTRUCTION 9TH GRADE MATHEMATICS PLACEMENT

Adopted: 12/12/2016

Revised:

Findings and Declaration of Purpose:

The Lewis Center for Educational Research Board (“Board”) recognizes that student achievement in mathematics is critical for preparing students for college and career, especially in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). A student’s 9th grade mathematics placement, in particular, is crucial to ensuring future educational success.

The Board, in compliance with California Education Code Section 51224.7, affirms that a fair, objective and transparent mathematics placement protocol that strictly limits the use of subjective criteria in placement decisions will result in an appropriate 9th grade mathematics student placement and will prevent mathematics misplacement.

Pursuant to California Education Code Section 260, the Board has the primary responsibility for ensuring that its schools’ programs and activities are free from discrimination based upon enumerated characteristics, including race and ethnicity. Because the Board is responsible for ensuring that all students, regardless of race or ethnic background, receive an equal chance to advance in mathematics, the Board desires to ensure that its schools implement a fair, objective and transparent mathematics placement protocol.

The Board therefore directs school administration staff to create, implement, and monitor a mathematics placement protocol that includes the following elements:

Reliance On Objective Determinations

Mathematics placement of 9th graders shall be based on objective measures. These measures may include:

- Norm referenced tests, such as STAR Mathematics
- Standardized State test scores
- Student grades that reflect comprehension and mastery of the subject matter, from both semesters of the 6th and 7th grade year and the first semester of the 8th grade year
- Other objective indicators of student performance and proficiency in mathematics

Additional Determinations:

For students whose appropriate placement approaches grade level proficiency, but is not

yet demonstrated mastery, these additional measures may be considered through a standardized teacher recommendation rubric:

- Work habits
- Growth over time
- Alternative demonstration of mastery in the classroom

Limitation On the Use of Subjective Placement Measures

Subjective measures, such as placement recommendations, may not be considered in determining 9th grade mathematics placement. However, recognizing that teachers and counselors are often aware of students' talents and abilities that are not reflected in objective data, an exception to this prohibition may be made to advance a student to a higher mathematics class than objective data indicates.

Timing of Mathematics Placement Decisions and Parent/Student Notification

Placement decisions shall be made according to a timeline that allows for maximum use of current objective measures. Placement decisions shall be communicated in writing to parents/students prior to the start of the school year; shall include the school's mathematics placement protocol; and shall indicate the objective factors that resulted in the student's 9th grade placement. Notices of placement decisions shall also include a recourse plan developed by the school, for any parents/students who may be dissatisfied with a student's mathematics placement.

Implementation, Monitoring, And Accountability

School staff involved in placement decisions shall be properly trained on the protocol and its use. The protocol shall also include steps for ensuring that it is being followed in practice, including provisions for checking that each student is properly placed according to the protocol within the first month of the school year. Any student found to be misplaced shall be promptly placed in the correct mathematics course.

Board Approval and Review

School administration shall report to the school board committee on a regular basis while the placement protocol is being developed. When the protocol is finalized, school staff shall return to the Board to seek approval of the protocol. Once approved, the protocol shall be prominently posted on the school's website and shall be made readily accessible to parents/students and administrators.