

# Hinsdale Central Mathematics

## Class of 2026 Freshman Placement Information

Welcome to Hinsdale Central High School! We look forward to helping you continue to develop your mathematical and problem-solving skills. Our goal is to help students experience a challenging and successful math experience during their time at Hinsdale Central.

To place students appropriately for their freshman year, we use our best professional judgment based on multiple sources of information. The sources we value include:

- Your current 8<sup>th</sup> grade course and curriculum
- Your performance on standardized tests
- Your 8<sup>th</sup> grade teacher's assessment of class performance
- Our experience with the high school mathematics curriculum
- Our knowledge of how students with specific achievement profiles typically perform in 9<sup>th</sup> grade

We made your initial placement decision with the goal of best serving you over your four-year career at Hinsdale Central High School.

### Placement Guidelines

Here are some guidelines for determining which course is the best fit for beginning your high school math career. Note that no matter what course a student takes during 9<sup>th</sup> grade, there are numerous paths open for future coursework depending on students' progress and learning goals.

#### **If your 8th Grade Math Class is Pre-Algebra or Grade 8 Common Core Math, available courses:**

- Algebra 1 – Students who have successfully completed Pre-Algebra coursework and are prepared for Algebra 1 should have solid arithmetic skills, as well as appropriate number sense, including conceptual understanding of ratio and proportion, and positive and negative numbers. Students should also possess the ability to perform multiple calculations accurately without the use of a calculator, including proficiency at simplifying mathematical expressions and solving algebraic equations. Students in Algebra 1 should expect daily homework practice.
- Algebraic Reinforcement – This course is designed to support students by providing them strategies and mathematical models designed to help increase confidence in mathematics. It is for the student with growth opportunities in mathematics as identified by the MAP test. Students will have a personalized learning experience that includes instruction and problem solving. This class focuses on key foundational concepts that enable students to make connections while learning to think algebraically, and is intended to be taken concurrently with Algebra 1.

### **If your 8<sup>th</sup> grade Math Class is Algebra 1, available courses:**

- Algebra 1 - Algebra 1 is the foundation for all successive mathematics courses. A student who has a weak foundation in mathematics will have difficulty in future mathematics courses. If there is doubt about a student's Algebra 1 skills, repeating the course during freshman year is strongly recommended. Students who elect to retake Algebra 1 are not pre-determining or limiting their math potential, and will have multiple paths available for future coursework, depending on their growth and interest in mathematics. For instance, taking Algebra 1 in 9<sup>th</sup> grade does not preclude a student from taking upper level math courses, including Pre-Calculus and Calculus, depending on his/her progress during high school.
- Geometry - Geometry is a very different mathematics course than Algebra 1. Parents and students are sometimes surprised at the difficulty that students who were successful in middle school have adjusting to Geometry, because students can no longer rely on step-by-step processes to solve problems as they did in Algebra 1. For some students, this adjustment, combined with adjusting to the expectations of high school mathematics, can be overwhelming. Just because a student has been "advanced" beyond peers during middle school, does not indicate that they are prepared for Honors math at the high school level. Note that students who enroll in Geometry as a freshman will still have an opportunity to qualify for future Honors level courses, and will have the opportunity to enroll in AP Calculus as a senior, contingent on their continued mathematical growth and proficiency.
- Geometry Honors - Students who are successful in Geometry Honors have strong reasoning skills, learn independently, solve unfamiliar problems, and ask good "what if" questions. Additionally, students who are successful in Geometry Honors have strong reading skills and are capable of learning new vocabulary quickly. Students should also take their entire course load into consideration when deciding whether to pursue Geometry Honors, asking themselves, "Am I going to be challenging myself in many of my other courses?" "Will my course load allow time for myself, my family, activities and studying?" and "What are my long-term goals as a mathematics student?" Students in Geometry Honors should expect daily homework.

### **If your 8<sup>th</sup> grade Math Class is Geometry, available courses:**

- Integrated Algebra/Geometry Honors - A student who earned above average grades in Algebra 1 and/or Geometry should enroll in Integrated Algebra/Geometry Honors. Furthermore, students should take their entire academic load into consideration when making course decisions, asking themselves, "Am I going to be challenging myself in many of my other courses?" "Will my course load allow time for myself, my family, activities and studying?" and "What are my long-term goals as a mathematics student?" Students who enroll in Integrated Algebra/Geometry Honors as a freshman will have the opportunity to enroll in AP Calculus AB or BC as a senior.
- Algebra 2/Trigonometry Honors - Students who enroll in Algebra 2/Trigonometry Honors should have a very strong foundation of Algebra skills, be able to digest new ideas at a quick rate and appreciate a challenge. Students should not need to spend time reviewing algebra and geometry skills and procedures before applying previously learned content to new contexts. In addition to the characteristics of an honors student, a student should also possess solid organizational and note-taking skills. Students in this course should expect daily homework, and will need to spend additional time preparing for tests and quizzes.

**If your 8th grade Math Class is Algebra 1 or Geometry, and you are interested in an elective math course paired with your required math course:**

- AP Computer Science Principles - This course is an entry level AP course which presents concepts and computational thinking practices that are central to the computer science discipline. It provides an introduction to the rapidly expanding field of computer technology while focusing on using technology in creative, meaningful ways. This course is appropriate for anyone who is interested in the basics of computer science and would like to learn more about the field.

**Is honors right for me?**

- Students who are recommended for honors are prepared to handle more rigorous coursework, as defined by: greater retention of previous learning, deeper investigation of the content, brisk pace, frequent assessments, expectation of using proper vocabulary and notation, problems often require more than one skill, thorough solutions, not simply an answer, with written work and/or verbal explanation
- Students who are recommended for honors demonstrate or want to develop habits of mind, as defined by: an interest in expanding depth of knowledge, perseverance in problem solving, thinking flexibly, listening with understanding, communicating clearly, striving for accuracy, being able to work with others, analyzing arguments and solutions by asking questions, applying past knowledge to new experiences, continuously learning and open to feedback, finding enjoyment in the process of being challenged
- We strongly encourage students to consider their entire schedule along with sports and activities when deciding to take an honors math course.

**Questions?**

If you have any questions or would like to discuss your student's placement, please contact:

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