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A CALIFORNIA DISTINGUISHED SCHOOL

PCHS MATH PLACEMENT TEST FAQs

1. *When is the placement test administered?*

Placement Test – Saturday, May 20, 2017

Retest and Make-up Test – Friday, July 28, 2017

Checkpoint Assessment – In classes August 17-August 25, 2017

2. *Why do students need to take a test for math placement at Palisades Charter High School?*

Although many students successfully complete college preparatory mathematics courses in middle school, not all of these students retain enough of the essential concepts effectively so that they can apply the skills to higher-level concepts in more advanced courses. The Algebra Placement Exam assesses students' levels of *retained* knowledge from Algebra 1, the foundational course for all college preparatory mathematics. The Algebra 1 Common Core standards are available on the California Department of Education website, www.cde.ca.gov. If a student has not completed an Algebra 1 class, the placement exam will be used to assess their algebra readiness.

3. *What are the topics assessed on the placement tests?*

The Algebra Placement Exam assesses student proficiency with evaluating numeric and algebraic expressions, simplifying algebraic expressions, solving multi-step linear equations, graphing lines, writing equations of lines, solving and graphing linear inequalities, solving systems of linear equations or inequalities, simplifying expressions involving radicals, simplifying expressions using rules of exponents, simplifying expressions involving polynomials, factoring polynomials (with an emphasis on quadratics), solving quadratic equations, modeling with exponential functions, using logical reasoning, and data analysis and statistics.

4. *Should students study for the math placement test?*

Students are encouraged to review their notes from Algebra 1 or other middle school math courses. While students should, practice and review, studying or receiving extensive tutoring assistance for the exam may result in students placing into a course for which they are not adequately prepared. This often leads to students losing confidence in their abilities and struggling in mathematics throughout high school.

5. *Do all incoming 9th grade students need to take the test?*

Yes. Any student that does not take the placement test will automatically be placed Algebra A or Algebra 1A (depending on 8th grade math course) and will need to demonstrate proficiency on the previously mentioned concepts through the Checkpoint Assessment administered the first week of school.

6. *If a student is unable to take the test on the assigned date, will they be able to take a make-up test?*

Make-up tests will only be arranged with administrative approval from Palisades Charter High School in advance of the placement test date. Requests need to be submitted to the Director of Academic Programs and Guidance Services in writing, preferably by email.

7. *What score is required to pass the math placement test?*

Placement is not dependent on a total score. Placement is dependent on demonstration of proficiency on essential standards, with all standards assessed through multiple questions. It is possible for students with lower scores to place into a higher class than other students if they demonstrate proficiency on more standards.

8. *If a student does not pass the placement test, can they retake the test?*

Students who test on the initial May testing date and do not demonstrate proficiency on a substantial number of concepts will be offered an opportunity to take a retest later in the summer. Details will be included in the placement letters that students receive after the initial testing. Once students receive their initial placement, they have the opportunity to study the topics assessed on the placement exams to remediate through summer programs, tutoring, and/or independent review, if necessary. They can then take the PCHS Placement Retest to demonstrate proficiency with the standards assessed. If the student passes the Retest, (s)he will be placed into the next appropriate level of math. The final opportunity to demonstrate proficiency will be provided during the first week of school on the Checkpoint Assessment. *Please refer to the PCHS Math Placement Policy available at www.palihigh.org on the Mathematics Department page.*

9. *If students successfully complete Algebra 1 in middle school, why should they take the course again in high school? Is Algebra 1 at Palisades Charter High School the same course as Algebra 1 in middle school?*

All Algebra 1 courses in the State of California, in middle or high schools, follow the California Common Core State Standards for Mathematics. At Palisades Charter High School, Algebra 1 focuses on problem-solving with an expectation that students retain a greater depth of knowledge for each essential standard and demonstrate retention on cumulative exams. Taking Algebra 1 in high school will provide students with an opportunity to master the skills introduced in middle school, increasing chances for confidence and success in advanced college preparatory courses. Students who place into Algebra 1 will benefit from taking Algebra 1 in middle school and in high school.

10. *Will the Geometry or Algebra 2 classes review Algebra 1 material?*

No. Teachers assume that students enrolled in Geometry or higher are proficient in the prerequisite skills required for each course. There is little or no time for standards that are not part of the course. Each math class addresses the standards for that course.

11. *If a student completes Geometry in middle school but places into Algebra 1, will they be required to repeat Geometry as well?*

No. Students that complete Geometry AB in middle school, with grades of “C” or higher on their official transcripts, will not be required to repeat that course. Upon successful completion of Algebra 1AB, with grades of “C” or better, these students will be placed into Algebra 2A.

12. *Can 9th grade students place into an honors level mathematics course?*

Students who demonstrate high levels of proficiency on all standards will be placed into Honors Geometry (based on course offerings and availability) or Honors Algebra 2, depending on the course(s) completed successfully in middle school.

13. *Is the placement test the only thing used for placement?*

No. Appropriate placement is also determined by the math courses a student has already passed in middle school with a grade of C or better. In addition, performance levels on the California Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium (SBAC) may be used to advance a student. *Please refer to the PCHS Math Placement Policy available at www.palihigh.org on the Mathematics Department page.*