



## Math Course Selection Information for 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Families Frequently Asked Questions

Welcome to the Fremont Union High School District! This district brochure includes information based on our most frequently asked questions from 8<sup>th</sup> grade families about high school math and the course selection process.

### 1. What math courses will FUHSD offer during the 2017-2018 school year?

Core Courses
<b>Algebra 1 (Common Core)</b> <i>Required for high school graduation.</i> <i>Support classes available for those who need them.</i>
<b>Geometry (Common Core)</b> <i>Required for high school graduation.</i> <i>Geometry Enriched offered for advanced students.</i>
<b>Algebra 2 (Common Core)</b> <i>Required for 4-year college eligibility.</i> <i>Algebra 2/Trig offered for advanced students.</i>

Upper Level Sequence I
<b>Applications of Advanced Math</b>
<b>Advanced Placement (AP) Statistics</b> <i>College-level course—credit granted at the discretion of college/university.</i>

Upper Level Sequence II
<b>Math Analysis</b>
<b>Advanced Placement (AP) Calculus AB</b> <i>Two quarters of college-level calculus—credit granted at the discretion of college/university.</i>

Upper Level Sequence III
<b>Pre-Calculus Honors</b> <i>Weighted grade-point in UC system.</i>
<b>Advanced Placement (AP) Calculus BC</b> <i>One year of college-level calculus—credit granted at the discretion of college/university.</i>

### 2. Which math courses do 9<sup>th</sup> graders take in FUHSD?

Most freshmen take one of the following courses in 9<sup>th</sup> grade:

- Algebra 1 (with additional support if necessary)
- Geometry or Geometry Enriched
- Algebra 2 or Algebra 2/Trigonometry

Fremont Union High School District does not offer any pre-Algebra course options. However, we have a variety of interventions designed to support and accelerate learning for students who struggle with Algebra in 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

No matter what math class you take as a freshman, if you work hard and demonstrate that you understand course standards, you will have opportunities to accelerate your learning and reach our high level math courses before you graduate. Your 9<sup>th</sup> grade math teacher and your guidance counselor will be able to help you develop a plan for acceleration if you demonstrate the interest and capacity to do so.



### 3. How are expectations in high school courses different than in middle school?

In high school, your grades have consequences. In middle school, if you did not do well in math in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, you still moved on to 8<sup>th</sup> grade math. ***In high school, if you do not pass a class that you need for graduation, you will have to repeat it and pass it in order to earn credit.*** You need to earn credit for at least Algebra I and Geometry in order to graduate. If you want to be eligible for a four-year college, you will need to have passed at least Algebra II; and you probably will want to consider taking higher level courses, too.

The University of California and the California State University System (as well as most private colleges and universities) require that you pass a class with a “C” or better in order to have that class count in your application for admission.

### 4. How will my 9<sup>th</sup> grade math course placement be determined?

Sometime between February and April of your 8<sup>th</sup> grade year, you and your parents will be invited to a meeting to learn about the course selection process for your high school. At that time, you will be advised to consider a number of factors in making a request for your ninth grade math class.

Generally, 8 <sup>th</sup> graders who successfully complete:	Should take this course in 9 <sup>th</sup> grade:
Algebra Readiness OR Algebra Fundamentals OR Introduction to Algebra OR Common Core Math 8	Algebra 1
Algebra 1	Geometry
Geometry	Algebra 2

However, if you are doing very well in your 8<sup>th</sup> grade course (getting an A or B), you may want to consider taking a more challenging course:

If you are doing very well in...	You might want to try.....
Algebra 1	Geometry Enriched
Geometry	Algebra 2/Trigonometry

No matter which class you take in ninth grade, as long as you make sufficient progress in high school, you will meet requirements for graduation and college admissions.

When making your math course request for 9<sup>th</sup> grade you should consider the following:

- What is the next course in this sequence?
- How are you doing in your current math class? (Check your latest progress report.)
- What is the work load in the other high school classes and activities you want to take in 9<sup>th</sup> grade? (This will be described to you in high school orientation meetings.)
- What are your outside extracurricular time commitments? (For example: club sports; Scouts; music lessons, church or community activities)
- If you choose to take a higher level class (i.e. Geometry Enriched instead of Geometry; or Algebra II/Trig instead of Algebra II), are you willing to put in the extra time and work that will be involved in being successful in this class?

Once your high school has all course requests from both incoming ninth graders and current students, the information will be used to determine the number of class sections needed and staffing needs for the next school year. It can be very difficult to change courses once you complete the selection process, so it is important that you choose wisely.



## 5. What if I change my mind after requesting a math class?

In the spring of 8<sup>th</sup> grade you will take a diagnostic test (the University of California's Mathematics Diagnostic Testing Project, or MDTP) that will give you information about your readiness for high school math courses. You will take this test in your 8<sup>th</sup> grade class. You should consider the results of this diagnostic test as one piece of information, along with your 8<sup>th</sup> grade math course performance, your interests, and your plans for future math courses, to help you make your math course selection. Your high school will provide additional information about course selection during guidance presentations for incoming students and parents.

Later in the spring, you will receive confirmation of the courses which you have requested for 9<sup>th</sup> grade. At this time, you will know more about how you are doing in your 8<sup>th</sup> grade class and you will also have your MDTP results. Using that information, ***you should consider once again whether you have selected the right course for you.***

If you are confident of your choice, you can expect to be assigned to that math class. If for any reason, you wish to reconsider your original choice, you will have the opportunity to do so during the course verification process.

## 6. What happens to students who “over-reach” by requesting a class and then find that it is more difficult than they expected?

It is very important to make careful choices when requesting your ninth grade courses, because getting it wrong can make it difficult to find the classes you want after school starts.

If you do need to change your math class, there is a very real possibility that you will have to change your entire schedule and enter new classes with new teachers several weeks into the school year. You may also be required to drop an elective class that you originally chose.

Often when students request a transfer to another math class after the start of the year, all math classes at the school are already full. Should this happen to you, you should work with your Guidance Counselor or Assistant Principal to consider what options are available to you.

**REMEMBER, you can avoid this by making careful choices during the course selection process!**

## 7. My middle school math courses have recently aligned to the Common Core Standards. Will my high school classes also be aligned to these standards?

All California schools are revising curriculum in relation to the Common Core in kindergarten through high school. The new standards will be incorporated into FUHSD's current courses. The Common Core State Standards are designed to focus math instruction and build skills and habits progressively over a student's school career so that they understand mathematics deeply and can use it to solve authentic, real-world problems.

Fremont Union High School District recognizes that the promise of the Common Core may not be realized until all students have experienced this curriculum throughout their elementary and



middle school years. Students who are currently in middle school may not have had the benefit of experience with the Common Core except for a year or two.

## 8. Can I take a high school math course in the summer so that I can take a higher-level class as a freshman?

Students who are thinking about taking a summer course in order to advance in the math sequence should research and consider their options very carefully. These courses are much shorter than the full year course and may not provide enough time and practice to prepare you for the next class in high school. Some summer programs do not cover all the content of a full-year course so you may miss key concepts or skills. This is especially important to consider now that students are assessed on new, more rigorous content under the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The demands of CCSS leave little time for review of concepts that were supposed to be learned in a previous course.

If you want to challenge yourself and accelerate within the FUHSD math course sequence, your guidance counselor or freshman year math teacher will work with you to explore various options after your freshman year.

If you do decide to take one of these courses during the summer, IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT THAT YOU NOTIFY AN ADMINISTRATOR OR GUIDANCE COUNSELOR AT YOUR HIGH SCHOOL IN ADVANCE. The administrators or guidance counselor will explain your options and will ask you to document your plans as part of your course selection request.

**IF YOU TAKE A SUMMER COURSE WITHOUT NOTIFYING YOUR HIGH SCHOOL IN ADVANCE IT IS LIKELY THAT THERE WILL NOT BE A SPACE IN THE CLASS YOU WANT IN THE FALL!**

## 9. Can I “self-study” and skip a class in high school?

You should think very carefully about this before you decide to make this course request because:

- Some colleges and universities require the completion of certain courses. The University of California, for example, REQUIRES that students take Geometry even if there is evidence that they could do the work without the course.
- Remember, if you request a higher-level course and decide after the start of the year that it is too hard, another math class may not be open or available, or may require a change to all your classes.



## 10. If I take Algebra 1 in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, will I be able to take advanced math and science courses and get into college?

Yes. Colleges are looking for students who take rigorous coursework in high school, and are emphasizing the importance of four years of math so that students have a strong foundation for college-level mathematics. But it is important to know that many students do not take Advanced Placement math classes in high school and are accepted to four year colleges and universities. These students typically take a course sequence that looks like this:

9<sup>th</sup> grade: Algebra 1

10<sup>th</sup> grade: Geometry or Geometry Enriched

11<sup>th</sup> grade: Algebra 2 or Algebra 2/Trigonometry

12<sup>th</sup> grade: Math Analysis, Pre-Calculus Honors, or Applications of Advanced Mathematics

However, no matter what math class you take as a 9<sup>th</sup> grader in FUHSD's schools, if you work hard and demonstrate that you understand course standards, you will be able to progress through FUHSD's math and science course offerings and meet college eligibility requirements.

You will want to consult with your 9<sup>th</sup> grade Algebra teacher and your Guidance Counselor to determine how you should consider your math and science pathway progression in relation to your achievement level and goals, your interests, and other courses you are thinking about taking.