Instructions for APS 8th Grade Algebra I Placement Matrix

Intent and Objective

The math placement matrix is intended to serve as a tool in the Albuquerque Public Schools for placing students into the most appropriate and beneficial math class. The objective is to make the process of placing students in math classes more consistent across the district and to use multiple measures to meet the intent of the tool. The measures include: annual state tests (NMSBA), district benchmark assessments (DBK) on Data Director, an algebra readiness test (*Iowa Algebra Aptitude Test*), family/student perspective or self-assessment, report card grades, teacher perspective of student work habits, and student proficiency in pre-algebra standards. To ensure all stakeholders have participated in this math placement, signatures are required of student, parent/guardian, teacher, and administrator.

Process

Historically speaking, most 8th grade students are sufficiently challenged and supported in a general education 8th grade math class. However, some students may need the additional challenge of Algebra I in 8th grade.

Placement into an 8th grade Algebra I class occurs when a student has demonstrated a readiness for algebraic thinking and a desire to challenge her/himself in an advanced math environment. Please use the following procedures for determining enrollment in 8th grade Algebra I classes:

1. Give prospective 7th grade students the *Iowa Algebra Aptitude Test* in April. The assessment is available on the Data Director website and requires using a scanned form obtained from Testing.

2. Give each eligible student an open response question from the APS Math Task Bank at http://www.rda.aps.edu/MathTaskBank/fi_html/68tasks.htm. It is recommended that one of the following questions be used: "Tale of the Scale," "Sink or Swim," or "The Double Scoop Dilemma." Use the question's instructions & rubric to score a student's response. Place the scores on the math placement matrix.

To remain eligible for placement into Algebra I class, a student should earn no Beginning Steps (1) scores and no more than one Nearing Proficient (2) scores. It is suggested that all other scores be either Proficient (3) or Advanced (4). If there are multiple low scores from this assessment, the teacher may use her/his discretion, as supported by other measures, to propose the student remain eligible for Algebra I.

3. Students remaining eligible for Algebra I then complete a short paragraph expressing their math placement preference and their justification. If a student does not express a desire to be in Algebra I then s/he may have difficulty in the class and it is recommended that the student no longer remain eligible to be placed in an Algebra I class. The student is required to sign in this section acknowledging her/his choice of math class.

4. Teachers complete the remaining portions of the matrix. This includes the Work Habits and Standards Mastery sections. Applying the same 0-4 scale used in scoring the Performance Assessment Task, the maximum scores are 16 and 28, respectively. Some teachers use the total scores from these two measures while others look at the particular Habits or Standards in basing their recommendations. It is suggested that Algebra I eligible students have more upper-end scores, that is, closer to 4 or totals near the maxima.

5. Using their professional judgement, teachers recommend the student for placement in a particular math class. The teacher signs the matrix.

6. Send matrix home for parent/guardian review and signature, indicating their knowledge and approval of math placement.

7. School administration reviews the matrix, signs it, and registers student in next year's math class.