MCPS Initial Cohort Criteria - Rising Grade Four: 2026-2027

Grade-level math classrooms will provide flexible opportunities for enrichment and acceleration based on students' demonstrated readiness. This document outlines the initial math cluster criteria used to form student cohorts. To support effective differentiation while maintaining flexible access, each classroom will include no more than three instructional cohorts. Instruction, pacing, enrichment, acceleration, and support within these groups will remain responsive to individual student needs, and students may move between groups as they demonstrate readiness. Because students develop mathematical understanding at different rates, multiple pathways will remain available over time for access to enrichment, acceleration, and advanced coursework.

Math Cluster/Cohort	Criteria for Placement *Placement decisions are based on multiple measures and professional review rather than a single assessment score.*	Integrated Algebra 1 Timeline
Grade-Level Instruction with Consistent Support Students receive grade-level math instruction with additional support to strengthen foundational skills and build confidence.	☐ Report Card: Not Yet Meeting Proficiency or In Progress ☐ Required District Assessment Average Performance of 1 ☐ Winter MAP Score 179 or below ☐ MCAP Achievement Level 1	If your student maintains this level of performance, they will likely take **Integrated Algebra 1 by Grade 9.**
Grade-Level Instruction with Some Support Students engage in grade-level instruction with opportunities for deeper thinking and problem-solving, along with targeted support as needed.	☐ Report Card: Demonstrating Proficiency or In Progress ☐ Required District Assessment Average Performance of 2 or lower ☐ Winter MAP Score 189 or below ☐ MCAP Achievement Level 2 or 1	If your student maintains this level of performance, they will likely take **Integrated Algebra 1 by Grade 9.**
Grade-Level Instruction with Some Enrichment Students engage in grade-level instruction with consistent opportunities for deeper thinking, problem-solving, and extension activities.	☐ Report Card: Demonstrating Proficiency ☐ Required District Assessment Average Performance of 3 ☐ Winter MAP Score 207 or below ☐ MCAP Achievement Level 3 or 2 ☐ ACCESS Data: Student exceeded growth to target as measured by MSDE	If your student maintains this level of performance, they likely take **Integrated Algebra 1 by Grade 8 or 9.**

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Grade-Level Instruction with Enrichment and Some Acceleration Students receive grade-level instruction while also accessing advanced concepts and accelerated learning experiences beyond the grade-level curriculum.	☐ Report Card: Demonstrating Proficiency ☐ Enrichment Mark on Report Card ☐ Required District Assessment Average Performance of 3 or higher ☐ Winter MAP Score of 208 or above ☐ MCAP Achievement Level 3 ☐ ACCESS Data: Student exceeded growth to target as measured by MSDE	If your student mai of performance, they will likely take **Integrated Algebra 1 by Grade 8.**
Grade-Level Instruction with Consistent Acceleration Students receive instruction that is more complex and/or moves at a faster pace, introducing advanced concepts beyond grade-level expectations while remaining aligned with grade-level standards.	☐ Enrichment Mark on Report Card ☐ Required District Assessment Average Performance of 4 or higher ☐ Winter MAP Score 216 or above ☐ MCAP Achievement Level 4 ☐ ACCESS Data: Student exceeded growth to target as measured by MSDE ☐ Parent Consent	If your student maintains this level of performance, they will likely take **Integrated Algebra 1 by Grade 7.**
Course Advancement Students may advance to the next grade-level math course upon demonstrating readiness through the Accelerated and Enriched Instruction (AEI) assessment process.	☐ Assessed by AEI and the Department of PK-12 Mathematics on the above-grade-level content initiated by the school ☐ Parent Consent	If your student maintains this level of performance, they will likely take **Integrated Algebra 1 by Grade 7 or sooner. Other options may be reviewed.**

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Future Math Pathway

Schools will review data each year. These are samples, not stagnant pathways.

2026–27 Grade 4	2027–28 Grade 5	2028–29 Grade 6	2029–30 Grade 7	2030–31 Grade 8	2031–32 Grade 9	2032–33 Grade 10	2033–34 Grade 11	2034–35 Grade 12
Math 4	Math 5	Math 6	Math 7	Math 8	Integrated Algebra 1	Integrated Algebra 2	Pre Calculus	Calculus
Math 4	Math 5	Accel Math 6	Accel Math 7	Integrated Algebra 1	Integrated Algebra 2	Pre Calculus	Calculus A/B	Calculus B/C
Math 4 w/Accel	Math 5 w/Accel	Accel Math 6	Accel Math 7	Integrated Algebra 1	Integrated Algebra 2	Pre Calculus	Calculus A/B	Calculus B/C
Math 4 w/Accel	Math 5 w/Accel	Grade 6 Pre-Alg	Integrated Algebra 1	Integrated Algebra 2	Pre Calculus	Calculus A/B	Calculus B/C	Course Options

A strong foundation in Algebra is essential because it develops the critical thinking, reasoning, and problem-solving skills students need for success in higher-level mathematics, college, careers, and everyday life. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) identifies Integrated Algebra I as a Grade 9 course; therefore, students who complete Algebra in Grade 8 are already participating in an accelerated pathway. Students who take Algebra in Grade 7 are progressing two years ahead of the MSDE-designated sequence, which requires careful consideration of pacing, conceptual understanding, and long-term readiness for advanced mathematics. This acceleration also occurs in the context of students completing four additional years of mathematics in high school, for a total of six years of high school-level mathematics.