

School District of South Orange and Maplewood

Mathematics Department

Q & A Regarding Placement Test-6

1. Why administer an additional test to determine placement?

The PT-6 (Placement Test-6) provides additional and important information regarding student's knowledge and ability to process math. Like NJASK, it measures a student's cumulative knowledge of mathematical content and processes learned over the course of the year. Unlike NJASK, the content reflects the essential, foundational knowledge and skills students bring to the next grade level. The PT-6 takes on the characteristics of an external assessment. Students demonstrate their ability to take the math they know and apply it to new situations and contexts.

2. What is the form and content of the PT-6 (Placement Test-6)?

This District constructed assessment is entirely open-ended. That is, students must show their work or strategy. Test items are a composite of grade 5 and overlapping topics between grades 5 and 6. Questions require students to reason and make connections rather than recall facts or demonstrate skills in isolation. All questions come in the form of word problems or visual models. Students can receive partial credit for most items; they receive no credit if they do not show their work. Items are sequenced from easy to progressively more challenging items. The content is predominantly focused on number and operations, but other strands of the curriculum are represented. The test includes a subset of enrichment items that are designated acceleration questions. These are scored separately, and do not impact the PT-6 score.

3. How can I help my son or daughter prepare for this test?

The best preparation for this and any secondary math assessment is a good night's sleep and a good breakfast. In terms of content, the assessment spans the mathematics taught all year, so a regular review and application of prior learning is always a good idea. More importantly, on-going attention to making sense of everyday and classroom problems and situations enables students to become mathematical thinkers and decision-makers. Good math students are capable of seeing mathematical structure in a variety of situations, taking what they know, reason, and applying it to new contexts. This test is designed to assess this type of thinking.

4. How will PT-6 testing take place?

Fifth graders will be tested in their classrooms first thing in the morning on an unannounced testing date in March. The sixth grade teachers will administer the test. The test is untimed. Some students complete it in an hour, most take up to 1 ½ hours. For individuals who do not complete the test in a two hour span, the assessment team will evaluate their progress, determine if additional time would impact their placement, and make arrangements accordingly. Students who are absent will be tested within the following two weeks.

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5. How will accommodations be considered and enacted?

Students who receive accommodations for assessments as part of their school program will be afforded those accommodations when taking the PT-6.

6. If my son or daughter has one measure that does not meet the placement criteria, what opportunity will (s)he have?

There are two answers to this question. The first is immediate, the second long-termed. Students who have demonstrated a very strong academic record and miss one measure by a small margin will be invited to a summer program. In this program, they will develop content and processes that could prepare them for the more challenging level. Placement is contingent on performance in the specific class.

The second part of this answer is to assure you that there will be opportunities for students to change levels both in middle school and high school.

7. When will we be notified if our child qualifies for this summer class?

By the first week of May, all data will be analyzed and invitations to summer programs will be sent.