

MathPlus FAQ's

1. What is MathPlus?

MathPlus is an enrichment program in Grades 4 and 5 at all elementary schools in Hingham. MathPlus provides students with a degree of challenge and acceleration that cannot be accomplished simply through differentiation in the 4th and 5th grade classroom.

2. What is the goal of MathPlus?

The goal of the MathPlus curriculum is to provide students, who are ready, with some exposure to non-grade level material. The content focuses on more complicated problem solving, geometry, number theory, patterns, functions, and algebraic thinking than what all students already see in Everyday Math. Processing skills revolve around focusing on higher level thinking; including analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. There is an emphasis on individual responsibility and independent learning skills. The products that students will produce entail the ability to complete independent study (project) experiences. Additionally, there is an expectation for explanation and verbalization of processes used to create the product.

3. How are students chosen to participate in this program?

Students are selected by meeting benchmarks on 3 of 4 district-wide data points. These data points and benchmarks have been consistent for over a decade. We have re-evaluated the standards over time and have found that these targets continue to remain appropriate. We will re-evaluate the MCAS benchmark when MCAS 2.0 is administered.

- MCAS minimum score of 534
- NEML minimum score of 24
- CML minimum cumulative score of 10 for grade 4 and 15 for grade 5
- Classroom Inventory minimum score of 22

4. What is the Classroom Inventory?

The classroom inventory is completed by a student's classroom teacher at the end of the school year. Students are rated 0-5 in 5 categories:

Critical Thinking and Reasoning
Meaningful Participation in Discussion
Consistent Need for Enrichment
Task Commitment
Ability to Miss a Lesson and not be Affected

5. Is there a limit to the number of students who participate each year?

No. We are committed to providing the program for any student who meets the qualifications. Recently we have had to run two sections at Foster because we had a particularly large group of students who all qualified for the program.

Over the years, a typical cohort range is between 8-12 students per grade at each school.

6. When does the selection process happen?

Each September, the Elementary Math Specialists, in conjunction with the K-12 Math Department Director and the Elementary Principals, sort through the 4 data pieces to select students. The current classroom teachers of those students are notified next and families are notified about 2 weeks before the first class in mid-October.

7. How often does MathPlus meet?

Math Plus meets once in the 6-day cycle. The MathPlus class instruction happens during the regularly scheduled math instruction time.

8. When will my child be taught the lesson that was missed during MathPlus?

The expectation is that MathPlus students are strong enough students to quickly catch up on any material that they missed during that portion of the lesson. As they do not miss the entire lesson, students are not re-taught the lesson individually. If a student struggles to keep up with the regular curriculum due to time spent in MathPlus class, then we recommend that the family consider ending their child's participation for that year in MathPlus.

9. Are MathPlus and 6th Grade Math Enrichment different?

In essence, they serve the same purpose. However, we are not always able to have a Math Enrichment course in 6th grade due to enrollment and staffing constraints. That being said, participation in Grade 4 and 5 MathPlus has no bearing on whether a student will participate in 6th grade Math Enrichment. Children develop so quickly from Grade 4 to Grade 6 that it is important to re-evaluate the entire group and ensure that our selection process offers a fair chance for all students to participate.

10. Does participation in Math Plus affect leveling in 6th grade?

There is no leveling in 6th grade and participation in MathPlus has no bearing at all upon students being recommended for advanced level math courses in 7th grade. That recommendation is made solely upon performance in the regular grade 6 math classroom.

11. My child is not in MathPlus is there anything that he/she can do to ensure participation next year?

We re-evaluate our students in MathPlus each year. A student who did not participate in Grade 4 may have developed into a student who should participate in Grade 5.

As for specific preparation to try to improve benchmark scores, we philosophically do not agree with that approach as a district. We believe that approach creates an extrinsic reward with a goal that is not always met. We would prefer for your child to continue to do their best on the Everyday Math curriculum and develop a joy and confidence at a comfortable level. Children develop differently and elementary school is a long way from determining their ultimate path.

We understand that some families may disagree and would like to pursue practice on the Benchmarks. For those families, these are links to practice materials for NEML and CML.

Practice CML contests: <https://www.cmleague.com/product-category/books/>

Practice NEML contents:

<http://www.mathleague.com/index.php/online-store/contest-books-grades-4-6-grades-7-8-algebra-1-high-school/36-mathleaguewebsite/shopping/52-grades-45-and-6-contest-books>

12. I hear that once a child is placed in MathPlus that she/he stays in the class through the remainder of elementary school. Is this true?

This is not true. Most students who participate in MathPlus in Grade 4 continue to MathPlus in Grade 5. However, MathPlus is not a perfect fit for all students. The Elementary Math Specialists will reach out to families during the school-year when a student is struggling. Some students finish the year while some decide that it is best to not continue in MathPlus.

If your questions were not answered, please direct an email to the k-12 Mathematics Director, David Jewett, djewett@hinghamschools.org