

TOPS 8th GRADE MATH ENRICHMENT

Attention 8th graders: Do these qualities describe you?

- You like mathematics.
- You'd like to learn some new and more challenging mathematical ideas.
- When you encounter a math problem or concept that you don't understand right away, you see it as a challenge to be met rather than a frustration to be avoided.
- You enjoy working on math independently.
- You enjoy talking with other people about math.

If so, read on ...

For the fifth year in a row, TOPS is offering optional after-school math enrichment classes for 8th graders.

The two classes below will be taught by Lauren Picard, who comes to us with five years' experience teaching math and math teachers in California and Poland. The cost for each class will be \$360 for the academic year. Scholarships are available. Each class will meet once a week, 3:30–5:00pm on a day to be arranged. If you're interested in either of these classes, please come learn more at the information meeting for parents and students at **7 p.m. on Monday, September 24** in Mr. Ellis's room. Sign-up forms will be available at the September 24 meeting, in the TOPS office, and on the TOPS website. All interested families should fill out and return the sign-up form either at the meeting or to Mr. Ellis no later than **Wednesday, September 26**. Classes will begin the week of October 1. If you have questions about the content or structure of these courses, contact Jack Lee (jack@leeweiz.net, 206-524-6346 days or 206-543-1735 evenings).

NOTE: Neither of these classes is needed for placement in honors (2nd year) math in Seattle public high schools. Students who satisfactorily complete the regular middle school math curriculum can be recommended by Mr. Ellis for Honors Math 2 in 9th grade.

Algebra: This class will cover a full year of basic algebra, essentially the content of a traditional "Algebra I" course. Students will become intimately familiar with algebraic expressions, functions, and solving equations, learning both the mechanics of algebra and the reasons behind the methods. The class will use the wonderfully readable and accessible textbook *Elementary Algebra* by Harold R. Jacobs. The school has copies of the text, which students can borrow at no cost. This class will probably require an average of about two hours of homework per week. The Algebra class should help students to succeed in honors math by developing deeper understanding and solid skills.

Algebra Plus: This class will cover all the material in the Algebra class plus a significant amount of extra material, including some geometry and possibly other subjects. This class is for students whose preparation is excellent, who want an even greater challenge, and are willing to put in an average of 3–4 homework hours per week. Students who complete this class with very high scores *might* be eligible for placement in third-year high school math (Honors Integrated 3 in most Seattle public high schools, or Algebra II in some private schools).

Placement: Students will be given a placement test at the beginning of the course, to help gauge which of the two classes will be most appropriate for them. Both classes will cover the same material for the first few weeks, and then a second test will be given. After the second test, students who have demonstrated in the classes and on the two tests that they are ready for the extra challenge will be invited to join the Algebra Plus class if they wish. Only students with a strong commitment to learning and studying math outside of school should consider enrolling in the Algebra Plus class. As the year progresses, any students who struggle with the pace of Algebra Plus will be encouraged to switch to the Algebra class.