

(Note: This is a pdf copy of what I sent out via email at the start of the semester.)

Parents of Dr. Hartman's Advanced Algebra Students,

Welcome!

I like to periodically send out an overall update on how things are going in class as well as upcoming events (i.e., tests).

As I'm moving more and more to the "digital age" (and trying to save money by removing some of our copy costs), I am attaching links and general information to this email:

1. Please read the [math department information sheet](#) (click the link) OR click the link on the "Math Department" page of my website. Thank-you. (This information sheet outlines, among other things, when the math test room is open and the battery policy for calculators.)
2. Many of you have more than one email address listed on the student information site that I can access. However, THIS particular email is generated from the SynergyVUE system. In other words, this email account is one you have given to LPS!

Thank-you. Now for the course information document...and a few things about myself!

Advanced Algebra Parent Information

Teacher: Dr. Hartman (dhartman@lps.org)

Course Overview:

Advanced Algebra, also known as Algebra 2—the second year of algebra, is a necessary course for students considering post-secondary education. Practical applications are the basis for the study of many types of functions. The start of the year includes a very brief review of evaluating expressions, solving equations and inequalities, and investigating functions and their graphs. The big ideas of term 1 focus on the development of an understanding of both quadratic and polynomial functions. Term 2 helps students develop an understanding of radical, exponential, logarithmic, reciprocal, and rational functions. Students also learn more about statistics, sequences, and series during term 2.

Please note: This is an **advanced** algebra course. This course falls under the domain of a college prep course! Thus, expectations are much higher than they were in prior mathematics courses. Coupled with the "speed" of block scheduling, students will need to be prepared to work hard each and every day.

Grading:

80% of the grade will be summative—based in tests, retests, cumulative tests, and the final

20% of the grade will be formative—based on in class work, out of class work, and quizzes

90-100 (A)

85-89 (B+)

80-84 (B)

75-79 (C+)

70-74 (C)

65-69 (D+)

60-64 (D)

0-59 (F)

*Students earning a C+ or higher will be eligible to enroll in Pre-Calculus and/or AP Statistics.

**Students earning passing grade of a C or lower will be required to enroll in (and successfully complete) Pre-College mathematics before taking Pre-Calculus and/or AP Statistics.

LSW teachers are committed to helping your student learn algebra during class. Should your student need additional time, teachers and NHS student tutors are available for extra help before and after school. Encourage your student to touch base with us when they need help.

Expectations for Students

Be willing to be a **thinker** each and every day

Don't give up

Keep focused on the learning, NOT on the cell phone!

S.O.A.R.

Keys to success in class

Be in class every day, on time, and prepared

Be respectful of oneself, others & property

Fully participate in all activities

Most importantly: try every day

Again, keep focused on the learning, NOT on the cell phone!

S.O.A.R.

Top 10 List from Dr. Hartman

There are some very important things that I need to share with you regarding my life as well as your students' opportunity in my class. I think a top 10 list would help to get my thoughts down.

1. My oldest child started 7th grade this fall in Waverly and my youngest started 4th grade! While I am so excited for both of them, I am nervous like any parent. Lauren and Brianna mean the world to me! I want both to have a safe and meaningful experience each and every day. I expect nothing less than the best from the school, staff, and fellow classmates. I know you love your children as much as I love mine. You expect the best for them at school at all times. I keep this in mind everyday.
2. The best way to reach me is via email: dhartman@lps.org Again, I try to send out updates, kind of like a class newsletter, every two weeks or so.
3. Some of your children are involved in a lot! Balance is a goal for so many teenagers. From sports and clubs to work and family time, keeping a healthy balance is a necessity for all of us! Being a husband, father, teacher, department chair, and college instructor, I struggle with balance every week. I understand when your child feels a bit overwhelmed during various times of a course.
4. My website: teachers.lps.org/dhartman I try to post my assignments daily. This website gives you a chance to know what we are doing in class, allows you to check up on your student on a daily basis, and helps those who miss class. (Please use the VUE, as well, to check your student's grade)
5. Videos: I use my iPad to create "help" videos. There will be a help video for every review assignment handed out. I go through each and every problem on the review...sometimes I even offer more than one approach. There are times I create a "help" video for a concept that students struggle with (past or present). There are also times that I create a "lesson" video, created during the time I am actually teaching. I have made these in the past when large numbers of students are absent or the content is just of that "critical" type. These videos have helped so many students in the past. Students will find the links to my videos on the assignment log on the website.
6. Learning teams. As part of my work around the research agenda with Math in the Middle at UNL when I was a Ph.D. student, we extensively examined and used learning teams. I try very hard to develop a community within in my classes here at LSW. I often have students sit by different peers, encourage them to make good choices of who they work with during board work time, and encourage them to form study groups off-campus (at night), in the morning in the commons, math study area (B118 forum), or even in my room. More learning happens for students who tap into the resources of their peers. This will look different than many of the math classes both you and I were part of back when we were in school.

7. Homework. I have witnessed a culture of students at LSW who just don't do homework anymore. Whether they claim they don't have time or just don't want to, this "condition" is detrimental to learning. The point of homework is for students to practice certain things at home which in turn helps me know what direction I need to take the class and individual students. There will be times I create video that goes over the homework. Sometimes I will grade all or part of the homework. Other times I will ask students to post all work and solutions around the room for us to discuss as a class. Still other times I will hand out a worked-out solution manual. Students must practice before the next class period and must have some sort of feedback. Please monitor your student's homework completion. (Practice, practice, practice!!!)

8. Phones, phones, phones.... I cannot even begin to explain what a distraction phones have become in school. Far too many students are texting one another during class. Some keep their phones on their laps and even become disrespectful to teachers when teachers ask for the phone. Some students get a text from a friend to meet them at the drinking fountain and such...during class! Some students take calls during class (even from parents who call them!). I encourage students to have their phones on silent, visible at the front end of their desk. Students can always check their text messages and voice mail during passing times. If there is an emergency, the office can quickly notify a student to call home. Thank-you.

We are also beginning to hear about more and more cases where students are using their phones to cheat. Students of this generation must find a balance of when it's OK to use a phone in school. For students in the mathematics department, the only time to use a phone is between classes and NOT during the 90-minute block. I must have your student's focus...please remind your students of the expectations. I actually place a piece of blue tape on the desks and ask students to place their phones on their tape for the duration of the class.

9. Math Standards and Habits of Mind. The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics released the Principles and Standards for School Mathematics in 2000 and identified five content standards and five process standards that should permeate students' math experiences in school. The content standards are easily recognizable (Number & Operations, Algebra, Geometry, Measurement, and Data Analysis & Probability). The process standards are less familiar but will serve as the common thread for all work we do in this class:

- Problem Solving
- Reasoning & Proof
- Communication
- Connections
- Representation

I have posted these five in the back of my room and will refer to them often. Some of you may have hear of the "Common Core" at the national level. While Nebraska is one of the few states that has not adopted the "Common Core" standards, (a) I think that we will

adopt them soon and (b) the standards for mathematical practice are quite profound. I am trying to align my instruction around these eight standards. The “Common Core” states that students should:

- * Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them
- * Reason abstractly and quantitatively
- * Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others
- * Model with mathematics
- * Use appropriate tools strategically
- * Attend to precision
- * Look for and make use of structure
- * Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning

10. I will try to be available for extra help as much as I can. Encourage your student touch base with me (or even send me an email the night before) if they need some extra help. (PLC time on Tuesdays is a time reserved for teachers to work; however “NHS” tutoring is available in the Media Center during that time.)

Thanks for reading this,

Dr. Hartman