

# Mr. Whitcher's Math 8 2019-20 Course Syllabus

Welcome to our Math 8 classroom! I am excited to get to know you and help you learn as much as you can this year. We will be working together to prepare you for success as you continue into Algebra and beyond. I will give my all to make this class interesting, meaningful and fun. By reading and understanding the information in this document, you will be best prepared to get the most out of this class. Let's have an amazing year!

## Course Objectives

Students will practice and demonstrate knowledge and skills in the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Common Core Standards. Please refer to <http://www.corestandards.org/Math> for extensive information on these standards.

## Course Text

Math 8: EdGems, Core Math, Course 3, 1<sup>st</sup> edition © 2019, EdGems Math LLC

*The text will be supplemented with a variety of materials, such as hands-on manipulatives, teacher-created materials (including videos), and anything else that I find to be helpful.*

## Academic Calendar

1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter: Wednesday, 9/4 through Thursday, 11/7 ➤ Friday, 11/1: Last day to turn in work.	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter: Tuesday, 11/12 through Friday, 1/24 ➤ Friday, 1/17: Last day to turn in work.
3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter: Tuesday, 1/28 through Thursday, 4/9 ➤ Friday, 4/3: Last day to turn in work.	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter: Monday, 4/13 thru Thursday, 6/11 ➤ Friday, 6/5: Last day to turn in work.

## Back To School Night ! Tuesday, September 17, 6:45-8:00pm

Please come to school and experience your student's schedule in a condensed format. You will tour the classrooms using a bell schedule and meet all of their teachers, including me! I look forward to meeting all of you and having the chance to give you a personal overview of how things work in my classroom.

## Classroom Rules and Expectations

1. **Be Prepared.** This means students are in their seats, quiet and either working on an entry task or ready to learn BEFORE the bell rings. This also means having pencil, paper, your book, and last night's practice with you when you arrive. These are the minimum expectations for being "On Time" in our classroom.
  2. **Be Respectful...** of self, teacher, learning, classmates, and property. This means being quiet when the teacher or other students are talking to the class, keeping your hands to yourselves and not touching others or their property. Remember, we are here to learn; everything we do is working toward that goal.
  3. **Be Positive!** You always have control over your own attitude. There will be times when you do not enjoy what we are doing in class, who you are sitting by, or other things you have no control over. If you choose a positive attitude and make the most out of every situation, you will create a better learning environment for everyone. You will also find yourself to be happier, more successful and well-liked by others.
- These rules are posted throughout our classroom to remind students of the minimum expectations.

## Grading System: 100% Standards/Skill Based

### 75% Math Skills, 15% Vocabulary, 10% Life Skills

Standards that are tested will be scored with the following letter scale. ***This includes vocabulary tests, which are a vital component of this class.*** Please ignore percentages or other numbers you may see when viewing ParentVue or StudentVue. The letters shown below are all I see in the gradebook, and final grades are determined using a rubric, not a traditional percent-based grading scale.

- E: Exceeds Standard. Demonstrates deep and thorough understanding of standard in a variety of situations. Can manipulate and solve from more than one perspective. (***continued on back***)

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- M: Meets Standard. Demonstrates basic understanding of standard at the level it was presented in the classroom setting.
- N: Nearly Meets Standard. Demonstrates partial understanding of standard, needs more practice and another opportunity to demonstrate proficiency. A minimum of two opportunities will be given for each standard.
- BG: Beginning. Demonstrates little or no understanding of standard, needs significant practice and another opportunity at proficiency.
- I: Incomplete. Student did not complete assessment of the standard or did not make an attempt.

Here are a few things that will be assessed under the Life Skills category:

Attendance, Punctuality, Time On Task, Positive Behavior, Teamwork, Organization, Communication

***Scores shown above from standards assessments will be weighted according to class time invested in learning them to form the final letter grade for each grading period.***

## **Other important stuff:**

**Absences:** The policy for makeup work is that for each day a student misses, a one day extension is given on the assignment. For example, if you are absent for 2 days, you will have 2 days to make up the work or to prepare for any assessment that you missed.

**Advanced notice of absence for vacations, etc.** Although I appreciate knowing in advance when you will be gone, please do not expect to receive assignments in advance. Doing assignments without the context of classroom instruction and discussion can sabotage the learning process and lead to confusion in many cases. We will negotiate these things on case-by-case basis.

**Late Work:** All Standards-Based Tests will be done during class with ample completion time, so lateness is not an issue. There may be times you do not finish. If this happens, we will make arrangements to ensure you have the time you need to do your best. Tests will be given whenever appropriate, based on students having had adequate instruction and practice, not based on completion of chapters in the text or other artificial deadlines.

**Retakes:** Students will have 2 (sometimes 3) opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and skill for each standard. If a student's skill improves, the higher score will be kept for grading. If a student's skill drops, so will the grade. I apply a version of Power Law, not averaging, to assessments, which gives more weight to the most recent score. Always work hard to improve and strive for learning and understanding that sticks!

**Extra Credit** is not offered in my class. In many cases, extra credit is used as a substitute for late or missing work, and therefore does not contribute to an honest grade that accurately reflects what a student knows and can do.

**Communication:** <http://www.mrwhitcher.com>      [dwhitcher@ttsd.k12.or.us](mailto:dwhitcher@ttsd.k12.or.us)

**YouTube:** whitchermath      **Instagram:** @mrwhitcher      **Phone:** 503-431-5149

Email communication will receive the fastest response. Due to the volume of parent and student communication outside of class, I request this mode whenever possible; most issues can be solved with a quick message or two. Please make sure you have current and correct email addresses in Synergy. Phone calls will be returned as quickly as possible either before or after school. Due to personal commitments, there are days when I must leave immediately after school and will not return your call until the next day. I appreciate your understanding when this happens. Please encourage students to communicate directly with me, as I will gladly make accommodations to the rules and deadlines set forth above. Please communicate! I am excellent at arriving at solutions that work great for students and do not penalize them for things they cannot control. Thank you!