To: Future 7th Grade Students and Families

From: Amanda Caldwell, Executive Director of Curriculum for Middle-Level Education

Date: June 8, 2020

Subject: Accelerated 7th Grade Math

Liverpool has a long history of using a predetermined set of data (State assessment scores, marking period grades, iReady, and Aimsweb+ screening data) to identify students who qualify to take accelerated math as a 7th-grade student. The accelerated course has historically been viewed as a preparation course for students wishing to earn a high school credit in middle school by taking Algebra as an 8th-grade student. This year, due to our school closure due to COVID 19, we find that we are lacking much of the data that we previously used for accelerated student identification.

Discussions surrounding this predicament lead the District administration to have a deeper discussion about using such a rigid data set, and if by doing so, we have excluded students from opportunities to excel academically and to earn a high school math credit while in middle school. Although unintentionally, we believe that we have. Our goal as a District is to broaden the opportunities that we provide to students, not to reduce them or to make them unattainable.

An additional concern with identifying accelerated students this year is the idea that we likely have students with content and skill gaps, again due to our current school closure. We are working on plans to address skill and content gaps as we head into the fall of 2020.

Given our unique circumstance this school year, the District has determined that we will not offer an accelerated math class to 7th-grade students moving forward. Instead, the middle school math teachers will gather data, both quantitative (numeric) and qualitative (personal attributes of the learner) data on all of their students through the fall and winter. As we approach next spring, all students will have the opportunity to express interest in taking the Common Core Algebra course in 8th grade. Parents, students, teachers, and school counselors will work together to determine whether or not the Algebra course is the right choice for those interested students. Students who are ultimately scheduled for the Common Core Algebra course in 8th-grade will receive additional instruction next spring to prepare them.

The District hopes that this change in approach to middle school math will result in increased access to the advanced courses for all Liverpool students.