

# Welcome to Algebra I and math lab for 2008-2009

Instructor: Mr. Mongold - Webgrades: [www.mccsc.edu/~gmongold](http://www.mccsc.edu/~gmongold)  
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## **Important Dates:**

**Open House is Wednesday, August 20, 2008 at 6:00 p.m.**

**GQE (graduation qualifying exam) for 10<sup>th</sup> graders - September 16-18**

**NWEA Testing for 9<sup>th</sup> graders twice: between September 29 & October 24  
& between April 6 & April 24**

**Algebra I Core 40 end-of-course exam - sometime between April 27 - May 22**

***It's OK to be stuck. What you do when you don't understand or are stuck makes all the difference in the world.*** I love math and I love helping students understand math. I am looking forward to helping you be successful in Algebra. One of your most important contributions to the class will be to ask questions and make comments and to listen to your classmates' questions. I promise that if you follow the explanations in class and work on the problems I give you (both in class and homework), ask your questions, listen to your classmates' questions, stay calm and attentive, and do your homework, then you will learn mathematics this year. So, what should you specifically do when you are listening to me explain something at the board? As soon as I write a step or say something that you don't understand, I want you to stop me and tell me that you don't understand that step - honest. It makes my teaching more effective to know what you don't understand and let's me help you understand so then the next part will make sense.

***What should you do when you are at home doing your homework and you get stuck?*** I have a series of suggestions. First, throw your math book across the room - just kidding! - that won't help! First, look back at the notes you took in class to look at the example that we did that is like the problem you are working on now. If that doesn't help enough ask yourself if you thought you understood the example when I was explaining it in class. If you did, great; if you didn't, remind yourself that I want you to stop me when I write or say something in class that you don't understand. OK; next, look at the example in your textbook that is similar to the problem you are working on. The textbook has more explanations around the examples to explain. Reading it is like having a new explanation. Still stuck? Get mom, dad, or sibling involved or call the Homework Hotline 877-Ask-Rose (877-275-7673). If those options don't work or are not available, then please call me. I'll help you as well as I can on the phone and we may make arrangements to meet early before school starts. A successful student will be both studying notes and doing homework for every class meeting. I understand this is a dramatic change in behavior for many but all should understand that if you've been unsuccessful, behaving the same way you have in the past will lead to the same results they've seen before.

***Should I get a tutor?*** Perhaps. Tutors can be very effective but I believe that when they are effective it's often because they affect the student's behavior / habits during the rest of the week too and not just during the tutoring time itself. When a family is paying hard-earned money to the tutor, the family often steps in more effectively to make sure the student is doing homework and studying every night. Also, the student is on task with the tutor for a half-hour or an hour and sees that they can learn math when they do listen and work. If a student is able to make the connection with how that kind of attentiveness can help them learn more in the regular class. I have seen some wonderful results in tutoring situations but I have also seen situations where it didn't help. Free tutoring in small group settings is available during the school year on Monday nights from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Monroe County Library on Kirkwood and Wednesday nights at McDonalds West. These can be helpful as well. Teachers are waiting to hear the details but it is our understanding that there will be free tutoring available after school. I'll announce the details when I get them.

***Classroom Behavior*** I do expect students to behave in a way that allows me to teach and allows themselves and others around them to be attentive to the daily lessons and to work diligently during class. Being calm and quiet while listening and working hard and being respectful of others is the core of what I expect. Interfering with the learning of others is one of the most selfish acts a student can exhibit. If a student spends time and energy being

disengaged from math class by trying to talk to classmates, sleeping, writing notes to friends, getting other students off-task too, then I will be talking to the student, the student's parents, and the administrators to help get the student back on track. A student may need to be removed from class to protect the learning of others. Stay in your seats at the end of class. Do not get up and stand by the door waiting for the bell. I will usually call home at first if a student does not follow these reasonable requests but at times I will refer the student to the office.

**"Reader friendly" homework paper guidelines - Neat and Organized** I want students to effectively communicate their mathematics on paper. This will be a difficult adjustment for some who have developed the habit of showing very little on their paper or writing sloppily. I will help you get in the habit of doing the following if it is new for you.

- Include first and last name, date, period, and name of class.
- Include page number(s) and problem numbers in an organized heading.
- Copy the problem.
- Answers alone are not acceptable.
- Show the reasoning: show your work step by step and use phrases and sentences to clarify.
- Writing should be neat and legible.
- Put blank lines between problems. The paper should not look crowded.
- Drawings should be neat and labeled correctly - use a ruler for straight lines.
- Turn papers in on time.

**Tests and post-test Analysis and Reflection** I hope that all students share their tests with their parents to keep them informed. While it is fun to share a good performance with parents, it is certainly no fun to share a poor performance with your parents but parents can be one of your best resources for arranging extra help if they know you need it. To help you learn as much as you can, I ask students to do what I call a "test analysis." When a test is returned, students will have one week to analyze and correct their mistakes in writing and turn it back to me along with the test. Students will write at least two sentences that identify and describe the type(s) of error(s), describe what was misunderstood, and then work the problem correctly. At the end, for the reflection, the student will write a few sentences about what was successful for them and / or what was particularly difficult and / or what they might do differently if they could do it again and / or discussing concept(s) that were of particular interest.

**Calculators:** Graphing calculators can help us understand our some of the concepts of algebra - especially the ones illustrated by graphing. However, at the same time, we must be able to do our work by hand without the calculator. One of the biggest gifts I want to give to my students is a level of fluency in mathematics that will allow them to feel comfortable and confident when they are working math problems and learning new mathematics. So...our goal is to have students able to perform most procedures by hand while also being fluent in using a graphing calculator when appropriate. If your family can provide your son or daughter with a graphing calculator such as a Texas Instruments TI-83, or TI-84 then that would be awesome but it is not required. We will have some in class but they cannot be taken home. The price is approximately \$70 for the TI-83 and approximately \$100 for the TI-84. So...it's not required to have a graphing calculator but it's an effective supplement. Students can use them on the state end-of-course Core 40 Algebra exam.

**Grades - I use webgrades so parents and students can check their Algebra grade anytime:**

[www.mccsc.edu/~gmongold](http://www.mccsc.edu/~gmongold) A student's current grade is always determined by all homework and quizzes (weighted 60%) and tests (weighted 40%) accumulated up to that point in the grading period. Grades will start over every 6 weeks grading period. At any point in time a student's grade will be determined by taking 60% of their test average up to that time and 40% of their homework average up to that time. At the end of the semester grade, we will have a final exam. Your semester grade will be calculated by taking 85% of your grade so far and 15% of your final exam grade. **Students will be expected to share the necessary password with their parents** but parents may always call me to get the password.

**Make-up Work and Homework Corrections** If a student has an excused absence for "x" days then the student has "x" days to turn the make-up work in to me. It is up to the student to find out what work was missed

and turn it in on time. One very effective way to find out is to call a classmate in the evening of the day the student has missed so the student knows before the student gets back to school and study the lesson. If a student waits until they return, the student should ask a classmate before class starts or see ask me before class starts.

**Late Papers** Late papers will be penalized. Scores of papers that are one day late will be reduced by 25% and an additional 10% will be deducted for each additional day late.

**Brief Bio of Mr. Mongold:** Born in Bloomington in 1950, I attended Rogers Elem, Binford Junior High., and University High School (which closed when North opened). I was a math major at IU and went back to school to get my teaching license. I taught 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade math for nine years at Dyer Middle School, followed by two years at Tri-North Middle school, and then taught math at Bloomington HS South for 20 years. I am looking forward to my third year at North.

My two sons, Jonathan and Paul, graduated from North in 2000 and 2003. Jonathan loved track and wrestling. Paul loved soccer and track. After a circuitous path of several years of studying biology and French as well as living in France for a year and working in Alaska on fishing boats, Jonathan has just started medical school. Paul, who is almost finished with a computer engineering degree, finds himself reconsidering his goals and we'll have to wait and see what path he takes from here.

My wife, Linda, teaches 2<sup>nd</sup> grade at Rogers Elementary. We have always loved bicycling (becoming more serious after our sons were in college) and rode across America in 2005. We have ridden in Alaska, Hawaii, and Colorado in the last two years.

### Concerns?

During the year, if you have any questions or concerns please contact me. Parents are always welcome to visit our class.

*Greg Mongold Home 332-2694 School 330-7724 ext 50202 email: gmongold@mccsc.edu*

*webgrades: www.mccsc.edu/~gmongold North's Website: www.north.mccsc.edu*

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Cut off and return this part - keep the rest for your information this year.

**Please have your son or daughter return this section** with names and signatures after reading the information. Your signatures signify that the student has read this information and that the parent(s) have read or will read it at the first opportunity.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Student Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's email(s) if you would like me to have that information

**Remember Open House, Wednesday, August 20 at 6:00 p.m. I would love to see you.**

**If there is any information that you would like to share or questions you would like to ask please feel free to contact me by phone: (332-2694) or email. If you email, please include the student's name in the subject line so it doesn't get ignored as an unknown sender.**