

# Webinar Agenda: Ingredients for a Successful Algebra Program in Middle School

Regional Educational  
Laboratory  
Central

*From the National Center for Education Evaluation at IES*

## Overview

**Date and Time:** September 23, 2020 from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. MT

**Location:** Virtual

### Speakers:

- John Downs, superintendent of Hallsville School District in Missouri
- Mary Klute, researcher, Regional Educational Laboratory
- Jennifer Overley, retired math educator and district math coordinator at Cherry Creek School District in Colorado
- Mike Siebersma, researcher, Regional Educational Laboratory
- Douglas Van Dine, researcher, Regional Education Laboratory

## Description

This REL Central webinar presents elements of a successful middle school algebra program. REL Central presenters will review research on how Algebra I in a middle school is situated within a broader course sequence and teacher characteristics associated with student achievement in middle school Algebra I. In addition, they will present findings from a newly released study on using Grade 7 state math assessment results to help identify students who are ready for Algebra I. Rounding out the discussion, representatives from two districts will provide perspectives on the realities of making decisions to accelerate middle school students into Algebra I and the ways in which the research findings might inform future decisions.

Participants will gain an understanding of

- Research on factors associated with student success in Algebra I.
- Research on foundational knowledge and skills associated with student success in Algebra I and the findings of a recent REL Central study on the subject.
- Decision making processes from two districts accelerating middle school students into Algebra I and how the findings of the current and previous research might inform those decisions in the future.

## Agenda

**11:00 a.m. – 11:05 a.m. Welcome & Introductions**

*Facilitator: Mike Siebersma*

REL Central’s Mike Siebersma will provide introductions and an overview of the session objectives, format, and platform.

**11:05 a.m. – 11:25 a.m. Background Research on Algebra I**

*Presenters: Douglas Van Dine*

REL Central’s Douglas Van will review key findings in previous research on student success in Algebra I and the impetus for current REL Central research in region. Van Dine will then discuss an infographic depicting findings from the report *Associations Between the Qualifications of Middle School Algebra I Teachers and Student Math Achievement*.

Participants will be asked to complete a poll about whether students in their district are offered the opportunity to take Algebra I in middle school.

**11:25 a.m. – 11:35 a.m. Question and Answer Session with John Downs and Jennifer Overley**

*Presenters: John Downs and Jennifer Overley*

*Facilitator: Van Dine*

Van Dine will ask district representatives John Downs and Jennifer Overley to talk about how they design and staff Algebra I classes in middle school and what challenges they face in doing so. Participants will have the opportunity to ask district representatives questions using the Q & A box.

**11:35 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. Overview of *What Grade 7 Foundational Knowledge and Skills Are Associated with Missouri Students’ Algebra I Achievement in Grade 8?***

*Presenter: Mary Klute*

REL Central’s Mary Klute will provide an overview of the background, rationale, and methods of the REL Central study and share findings from the report.

**11:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Closing**

*Facilitator: Siebersma*

Siebersma will take final questions for presenters from the audience through the Q&A box. And he will close with ways to obtain materials and recording of the webinar on REL Central’s website and provide contact information for further questions.

Participants will be asked to take a feedback survey.