



Established 1857

DISTRICT NO. 87
BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS 61701-3394
BLOOMINGTON HIGH SCHOOL
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Dear Parents and Students,

This upcoming school year promises to be an exciting one for students, parents, and teachers alike. The Bloomington High School Math Department is energized by the prospect of working with your children to help them succeed and provide them with a solid foundation for their future education.

One motivating component of our mathematics instruction will be the use of graphing calculators in all Algebra II/Trigonometry, Honors Algebra II/Trigonometry, Pre-Calculus, Honors Pre-Calculus, and Advanced Placement Statistics classes. Graphing technology aids students in discovering new ways to think about problems and in analyzing data to come up with their own answers to problems. These tools give students a way to explore ideas and visualize concepts in greater depth than would otherwise be possible. Used appropriately, graphing technology can help lead to better comprehension of concepts and their real-world applications.

We recognize that using technology in the classroom is not a substitute for mastery of basic skills. Indeed, we stress building every student's fundamental skills in mathematics, science, and other core subjects.

Beginning with the fall semester, teachers and students will be using graphing calculators in the above mentioned classes. Teachers will be using Texas Instruments TI-83 Plus and TI-84 (Plus or Silver edition) graphing calculators in their demonstrations/lessons. Although we recommend these calculators, students may purchase the graphing calculator of their choice (with the exception of the TI-89 which will be allowed only in AP Calculus), knowing that our demonstrations will be on the above calculators. **We need each student to have his or her own personal graphing calculator for use at school and at home to increase proficiency and comfort level with this tool.** The reason we sent you this letter during the summer is to encourage you to find economical ways to provide a graphing calculator for your child.

The reason we chose the TI-83 Plus and TI-84 calculators is because they are upgradeable, user friendly, and students can use them for several years of school. It is important to note, too, that graphing calculators like the TI-83 Plus and TI-84 are permitted for use on the SAT and ACT exams and are permitted or required on several Advanced Placement (AP) exams. Our state's math exam, the Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE), also permits the use of these graphing calculators. While we are recommending graphing calculators that can be used in class and on standardized tests, this is not true for all graphing calculators like TI-89 calculator. In this mailing you will also find a complete list of acceptable and non-acceptable graphing calculators for use in BHS Math classes. When purchasing a graphing calculator, consider this a long-term investment in your child's education.

To learn more about graphing calculators in math classrooms, please visit the Math Department website at www.district87.org/bhs/math/calculators.htm.

If you have any questions about the curriculum or our use of technology, please contact your student's teacher or me. Students with a financial concern about purchasing a graphing calculator should contact Mrs. Helmers, BHS Principal.

Sincerely,

Nancy Powell, Lead Teacher
Bloomington High School Math Department