

# Teacher Observation Report

Meridian Academy • Department of Instruction & Professional Growth

## Teacher Observed

**Sarah Chen**

8th Grade Mathematics • Room 204

## Observer

**Dr. James Morrison**

Instructional Coach, STEM Department

## Date

October 15, 2025

## Class

Algebra I • Period 3

## Type

Formal, Announced

**Lesson Topic:** Solving Systems of Linear Equations by Graphing

**Students Present:** 24

**Duration:** 50 minutes

**Start Time:** 10:15 AM

**Pre-Observation Conference:** Held on October 10, 2025. Ms. Chen identified her focus areas as student engagement during direct instruction and the use of formative assessment to guide pacing. She expressed interest in feedback on her questioning techniques and strategies for supporting struggling learners during independent practice.

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## Domain I: Planning and Preparation

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| Criterion                                                         | Rating | Evidence & Comments                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Lesson objectives are clear, measurable, and aligned to standards | 4      | Objectives posted on board; referenced CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.8.EE.C.8; students could articulate the goal when asked.                                   |
| Content knowledge reflects depth and accuracy in subject matter   | 5      | Demonstrated strong conceptual understanding of intersection points as solutions; connected to prior learning on linear functions seamlessly.       |
| Instructional materials are thoughtfully selected and prepared    | 4      | Graphing calculators ready for each pair; coordinate-plane handouts pre-printed; worked-example slides were clear and error-free.                   |
| Lesson structure is coherent with logical sequencing              | 4      | Warm-up review of slope-intercept form led naturally into the main concept; transitions between segments were smooth and purposeful.                |
| Assessment strategies are planned to monitor learning             | 3      | Exit ticket planned but not distributed due to time constraints; informal checks during circulation were effective but not systematically recorded. |
| Learning activities accommodate varied student needs              | 3      | Strong core activity but limited scaffolds for the three ELL students; extension problems available for early finishers.                            |

Rating Scale: 1 = Unsatisfactory 2 = Needs Improvement 3 = Developing 4 = Proficient 5 = Exemplary

## Domain II: Classroom Environment

| Criterion                                                     | Rating | Evidence & Comments                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Teacher-student interactions convey warmth and mutual respect | 5      | Greeted each student by name at the door; used affirming language throughout; students appeared comfortable asking questions and making mistakes.              |
| Classroom routines and procedures operate efficiently         | 4      | Materials distribution took under 90 seconds; students knew pairing protocol; transition from warm-up to main activity was nearly seamless.                    |
| Student conduct standards are clear and consistently upheld   | 4      | Classroom norms poster visible and referenced; one off-task pair was redirected discreetly and effectively without disrupting flow.                            |
| Physical environment supports learning goals                  | 4      | Desks arranged in pairs for collaboration; anchor charts for linear equations displayed; adequate space for teacher circulation.                               |
| Classroom culture encourages intellectual risk-taking         | 3      | Several students volunteered answers confidently, but a small group of four students near the back did not participate in whole-class discussion at any point. |

Rating Scale: 1 = Unsatisfactory 2 = Needs Improvement 3 = Developing 4 = Proficient 5 = Exemplary

## Domain III: Instructional Delivery

| Criterion                                             | Rating | Evidence & Comments                                                                                                                                                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Learning objectives communicated effectively          | 4      | Stated “By the end of today you will be able to find where two lines meet and explain what that point means” in student-friendly language; returned to the objective mid-lesson. |
| Explanations are clear, accurate, and well-scaffolded | 4      | Used the “I Do, We Do, You Do” model effectively; broke down graphing steps with a visual organizer; one minor error in the third example was quickly self-corrected.            |
| Questioning promotes higher-order thinking            | 3      | Majority of questions were recall-level (“What is the y-intercept?”); only two questions pushed analysis (“What would happen if both lines had the same slope?”).                |
| Student engagement and participation are maximized    | 4      | Think-Pair-Share used twice with strong participation; all pairs actively graphed during independent work; cold-calling was balanced and supportive.                             |
| Feedback is timely, specific, and constructive        | 4      | While circulating, provided targeted feedback (“Check your y-axis scale — does each square match one unit?”); praised specific strategies rather than general effort.            |
| Lesson pacing responds to student understanding       | 3      | First segment was well-paced, but final ten minutes felt rushed when several pairs needed more time with the last problem; exit ticket omitted.                                  |

Rating Scale: 1 = Unsatisfactory 2 = Needs Improvement 3 = Developing 4 = Proficient 5 = Exemplary

## Narrative Observation Notes

### Lesson Opening (10:15–10:22 AM)

Ms. Chen began with a warm-up problem displayed on the board: “Graph  $y = 2x + 1$  and identify the slope and y-intercept.” Students completed this individually in their notebooks while she took attendance and checked homework completion. After three minutes, she projected a student’s correctly graphed solution using the document camera and briefly reviewed slope-intercept form. The transition to the day’s objective was smooth, anchored by a relatable scenario: “Two ticket vendors are selling concert tickets with different pricing structures — how do we figure out which one is the better deal?”

### Direct Instruction & Guided Practice (10:22–10:40 AM)

Using the “I Do” phase, Ms. Chen modeled solving the system  $y = 50x + 20$  and  $y = 35x + 50$  by graphing both lines on the coordinate plane, narrating each step clearly. During the “We Do” phase, students guided her through a second example while she recorded their input on the board. The class then moved into paired practice with six progressively challenging systems. Ms. Chen circulated purposefully, spending extra time with pairs that had made scaling errors on their axes — a common misconception she addressed by asking, “What does each square on your grid represent?”

### Closure & Debrief (10:40–10:50 AM)

The planned exit ticket was not distributed. Instead, Ms. Chen called on three students to summarize the key concept and asked the whole class a closing reflection question. While the verbal summary was accurate, several students were visibly packing up during the final two minutes, suggesting the closure lost some instructional impact.

## Strengths

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- **Positive Classroom Climate:** Ms. Chen has cultivated a learning environment where students feel safe, respected, and motivated to participate. Her practice of greeting students by name and using affirming language sets a standard worth highlighting.
- **Deep Content Knowledge:** Her ability to connect systems of equations to real-world contexts and prior learning about linear functions reflects strong mathematical understanding and thoughtful lesson design.
- **Effective Collaborative Structures:** The use of Think-Pair-Share and paired graphing activities kept students actively engaged. The “I Do, We Do, You Do” framework provided a clear and supportive progression.
- **Purposeful Circulation and Feedback:** While moving through the room, Ms. Chen delivered feedback that was specific, actionable, and focused on student thinking rather than just answer correctness.

## Areas for Growth

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- **Questioning for Higher-Order Thinking:** The majority of questions posed during the lesson were at the recall and comprehension level. Incorporating more analysis and evaluation prompts — such as comparing solution methods or predicting outcomes — would deepen student reasoning.
- **Differentiation for Diverse Learners:** While the core activity was strong, additional scaffolds for English Language Learners and struggling students were limited. Consider providing sentence frames, bilingual glossaries, or targeted small-group instruction during independent practice.
- **Lesson Closure and Formative Assessment Routines:** The exit ticket was planned but not executed, and the closure felt abbreviated. Establishing a protected five-minute wrap-up routine would ensure consistent formative data collection and reinforce key take-aways.
- **Monitoring Participation Equity:** A small group of students near the back of the room did not contribute during whole-class discussion. Implementing randomized response strategies or structured turn-taking protocols could broaden participation.

## Summary & Recommendations

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**Overall Observation Outcome:** Proficient. Ms. Chen demonstrates solid instructional skills, strong relationships with students, and a commitment to continuous professional growth. Her lesson was thoughtfully planned, well-executed through the majority of the period, and reflected a student-centered approach to mathematics instruction.

### Priority Action Steps:

1. Plan and implement at least two higher-order thinking questions per lesson, using a question stem bank aligned to Bloom's Taxonomy as a planning tool.
2. Develop a differentiated support toolkit for Algebra I that includes visual organizers, sentence starters, and tiered practice problems for ELL students and struggling learners.
3. Implement a consistent closure routine (final 5–7 minutes of every class) that includes an exit ticket, a brief written reflection, or a structured pair-share summary.
4. Use an intentional participation tracking method (e.g., a seating-chart checklist or equity sticks) to ensure all students have opportunities to contribute during whole-class discussion.

**Follow-Up:** A post-observation conference is scheduled for October 17, 2025 at 3:30 PM in Room 204. Ms. Chen is encouraged to bring student work samples from the observed lesson and her reflections on the four action steps above. A follow-up informal observation will be conducted within four weeks to monitor progress.

**Signatures**

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Dr. James Morrison, Instructional Coach  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Sarah Chen, 8th Grade Mathematics  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Dr. Elena Vasquez, Principal, Meridian Academy

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