

sci.math: Re: 64 – is this the only number that is both a sq and a cube?

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Re: Schooling

When I took pre-calculus in High school, the course included introduction to limits, complete with epsilon-delta proofs, induction, [with lots of exercises], vectors (i.e. dot and cross products, vector algebra etc), intro to linear algebra, etc. AS PART OF THE REGULAR COURSE MATERIAL. It covered an elementary intro to abstract algebra [at a low level], theory of equations, etc. To prepare for the study of differential calculus, we learned about $\sin(x)/x$ as $x \rightarrow 0$, the binomial thm etc. etc. It was one of the best math courses I ever had { and I later got to take complex variables from Ahlfors and algebra from Birkhoff} and was taught by an excellent, cancel that, SUPERB teacher.

My son is now taking the same course, in the same grade, in the same school, and the textbook is so watered down it makes me want to puke. The book includes much too much material that should have been covered in the first two years of algebra. And this is *supposedly* an "honors" course.

My graduating class had 8 National Merit scholars in a class of a little over 400. Recent classes have had only one or two in classes that are 50% bigger. Yet there are 3 to 4 times as many students on the "high honor roll" as there were when I was in high school.

Barf. Puke. Retch.

Here is something telling. Sometime in the mid 80's

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my high school took first place, in the entire country, in a calculus competition. At the same time, the wrestling team won its 7th or 8th state title. The latter was front page news and two whole pages of the sports section was devoted to it. There was a whole article devoted to one of the wrestlers. The story about the calculus team got about 1 column somewhere in the back pages.....

Can you say "screwed up priorities"? I wrote a letter complaining about the bias. I was the perfect person to do so, because I was also on the wrestling team when I was in high school; I could not be accused of bias. The newspaper printed the letter, but it got NO reaction.

Note: The calculus teacher, Joe Ford, was superb, and his teams were consistently in the top 10 nationwide.

"You can lead a horse's ass to knowledge, but you can't make him think."