

Newcastle Elementary Student Placement Process

April 23, 2009

Class Placement

In the best of all worlds, we would know in advance exactly how many classes we could offer at each grade level and who would be teaching each of those classes. However, we are still awaiting staffing numbers for next year as the district sorts through the impact of enrollment, budgets, etc.

Unfortunately, it is August when we determine final enrollment. As you know, enrollment determines staffing. I would like to thank you in advance for your understanding in this process and be assured that we will do all we can to insure thoughtful placement of each child.

Student Placement

Many parents ask what opportunity the parent has in providing input into their child's placement from year to year. Hopefully the following information will be helpful.

The classroom placement process is VERY complex and many factors enter into the decision-making process. Each of the following are considered before final rosters are prepared:

- the program needs of the child
- balanced ratio of boys to girls
- a balance of achievement levels in literacy and mathematics
- motivation level of each student
- behavior factors regarding each student
- compatibility of students with others in the classroom (i.e., separating students who have not worked well together in the past)
- independent work habits
- social needs and leadership skills
- information provided by the teacher

The staff takes the task of placement very seriously. We assure you that each grade level team (with assistance of specialists, guidance team, etc.) take much time, effort and care in developing class rosters that result in offering all children a quality educational experience. Once balanced rosters are created teachers will be assigned.

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Parent Information

As parents you may have pertinent information about your child that you would like considered in the placement process. Examples of information staff find helpful are: "Please separate my twins, Sally and Suzie," or "Please do not place my son Joey in the same class as Fred as we are neighbors and they are together all the time," or "My child has only been in the United States one month and needs ELL support".

Examples of comments that we all agree upon are: "We want a warm, nurturing, caring environment for our child," "We want our child challenged," "We want our child in a structured classroom". We take these comments as a given; it is each teachers responsibility to provide a nurturing, challenging, safe environment for every student. The task for the current year teachers is to develop balanced classrooms based on the knowledge they have about the students, not the teachers at the next grade level.

If you choose to provide specific information regarding your child that the teacher does not have or may be unaware of, please provide a written letter (no e-mail will be accepted) addressed to the Principal at the address below. Written letters are due by Monday, May 4, 2009.

Christy Otley, Principal
Newcastle Elementary
8400 - 136th Avenue SE
Newcastle, WA 98059

Be reassured that theses letters will be kept confidential. Note that we do not accept requests for individual teachers by gender, experience level, or name.