

Around this time of the year I'm often asked, what goes into the process of placing students into classrooms? So, here are the answers to some of the most frequently asked questions on this topic:

[What is the goal of placement?](#)

The goal is to create classrooms at each grade level where student personalities and academic strengths and needs are well-balanced and well-matched to the teacher, providing a heterogeneous mix of students.

[Who is involved in the placement process?](#)

This is truly a collaborative effort that has the best result when parents, teachers, and the principal are involved. Each role is slightly different.

[What is the parents' role in this process?](#)

Parent input is very important in providing the staff with their perspective of their child, since at times this may be different from how teachers view a child. Children are often very different at home than in school. Parents will receive a letter from Mrs. Mulholland each spring inviting their input.

[So, what should parents write on the input form?](#)

It would be most helpful for parents to share their perspective about the type of *classroom environment* and *teacher qualities* that you feel would be the best fit for your child.

[Will my child be placed with some familiar students?](#)

Yes. We make every effort to place each child with at least one student from their previous class. If you would like to *suggest* which students would or would not be a good match for your child, please include that in a letter to the Mrs. Mulholland. However, please understand that the complexity of this task will not make it possible to meet all such requests.

[Is it o.k. to request a specific teacher?](#)

No, we ask that you not request a specific teacher. I know that there are many parents who want to select a specific teacher. Unfortunately, if we were to form classes based on parent selection not only would we be unable to achieve our goal of balanced classes, but more importantly students would not benefit from the expertise of our staff's knowledge of all students.

[But, what if we have had a very positive experience with a particular teacher?](#)

It's hard for parents to know for sure which teacher will be the best match for their child since parents don't have the opportunity to truly know each teacher in a thorough, first-hand manner. Sometimes a successful teacher pairing for an older sibling may not work as well for the younger sibling. Also, experiences other parents have had with a particular teacher may not be a good indicator of how you or your child would interact with that teacher. Personalities and chemistry are so variable that it's difficult to judge from someone else's experience.

[What if we feel a particular teacher will not be a good match, is it o.k. to say so?](#)

Yes. If you have had a prior experience with a teacher that was not positive or if you wish each child in your family to have a different teacher we welcome that information as long as you indicate the reason for your request.

[Will my child learn the same things in each classroom at the grade level?](#)

Our curriculum and teaching methods are based on the same philosophy at each grade. The vast majority of what children learn will be the same regardless of which teacher the child has. Teachers at each grade level plan together, discuss student needs, and coordinate their programs frequently. However, all teachers clearly have their own personalities, interests, and strengths. Their classrooms will reflect this, but it is *in addition* to our district curriculum not in place of it.

[Who actually makes the decision?](#)

The teachers and the principal are all involved in this decision. Towards the end of the school year, each grade level team meets with the principal to create the initial list of classes. This list is shared with the specials team and the school guidance counselor who have an opportunity to know a broader range of students than the individual classroom teacher. Changes are suggested to the principal who adjusts the classes after first consulting with the child's present teacher. Before being finalized the lists are once again reviewed by the entire teaching staff and the principal, though the final decision rests with the principal.

[When will we find out who our child's teacher will be?](#)

Usually in late August parents will receive a letter by mail indicating the child's placement. New students move into the district over the summer and we need to hold off on final decisions so that we can include these students in the process.

[What should I do if I strongly feel the selected teacher doesn't match the criteria I requested?](#)

Contact the principal by phone or in an email to discuss this concern. Generally we have found that our process works quite well and most families are very pleased with their child's placement. Very rarely has a change been made once the letters are mailed. Even one change can significantly affect the overall class balance. In any event, please remember that it's best not to share your concerns with your child.