

Elementary School Pilot

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It is no surprise that children learn in different ways and at different rates. The hard part is trying to accommodate those many needs each and every day for all students. We have done an amazing job at adapting to the children's needs the best we can thus far. However, as a district, and as educators, we feel that we can always continue to do better.

After much research, observation and asking questions about how we can continue to improve this we have been driven by the children to change how we teach. As a school district that desires to be respected by others and strives to prepare our students to thrive in their ever changing world, we as educators are compelled to "change with the students." Some ask why and some ask how. I say "because kids deserve it and the rest we will learn together!"

In an effort to "change with the children" and meet students where they are at and stretch them based on their abilities we plan to pilot a multi-age classroom next year. What is a multi-age classroom? It is a classroom that is made up of placing together a balance of numbers of students of different age groups with a range of achievement levels in an effort to reach all students at their ability and grow them as individuals. The teacher plans instruction and assessment expecting and celebrating diversity within the class. A multi-age classroom puts learners at the center, both socially and academically. On the social side, younger children look for guidance to older students who know the ropes, while the older students in the classroom organically learn about mentoring, leadership, and collaboration. It gives students an advantage of being responsible for their own learning and allows for them to take risks. Research shows that students in a multi-age classroom, or one that personalizes learning, proves that without the need to have all children be at the same place at the same time without regard for ability, teachers can focus on regarding each child as a unique individual that they are. Those who are stronger in one subject may assist others and then be on the receiving end of support in another area. Such opportunities in the classroom result in students learning and excelling in THEIR area of excellence along with creating students that have more empathy for one another, a trait that carries over to their daily social lives.

The multi-age classroom we plan to pilot at the elementary will be comprised of approximately eleven third graders and eleven fourth graders with two teachers. These children have been chosen randomly and will be contacted to discuss such placement for their child. This will be completely optional but have already found that several families are interested. It will be my promise that this classroom, as well as all classrooms, will be providing some form of personalized learning in order to continue helping all children.