

Dear parents of Golden Gate,

At Golden Gate, the creation of balanced classes is fundamental in supporting the instructional program and diverse needs of all the learners within the classroom setting. The class creation process is an extremely complex one involving the gathering of information about student needs and the making of collaborative decisions about students' placement in classes.

The purpose of the Class Placement Process is to maximize the learning and teaching opportunities for all students and teachers by constructing balanced classes. Every effort is made to minimize the potential for negative student interactions. Collaborative staff teams, which include the classroom teachers, student services and administrators make up the team. Using professional judgment, we strive to construct classes that are heterogenous (mixed) and balanced in composition.

The following criteria are used to established balanced classes:

- Student performance
- Our knowledge of social interactions and dynamics between individual students and group of students
- Placement of students new to Golden Gate
- Male/female ratio
- Band/art class size combinations (option choices)
- Band composition (instrument selection)
- Approximately equal sizes for class sizes
- Students with exceptional needs
- Choir (pull outs)

Given the criteria used to generate class groups, it is difficult to accommodate requests that we get to place a particular student with another student or group of students. There are many opportunities for students to socialize within the context of a school day, or during options, practical arts, without being in the same academic grouping.

While no class group will be seen to be perfect by everyone, it is essential to the formation of the best possible balanced learning group that the school team is allowed to operate for the benefit of the majority of students.

Decisions regarding class formation rest best with the school as we have every child's well-being, learning and interest in mind. Parents can assist the process by:

- Helping their children to understand the importance and complexity of class formation.
- Supporting placements that have been made.

At Golden Gate Middle School, we also have multi-grade homerooms. The purpose of the multi-grade homerooms is to align with the Middle Years' Philosophy in providing opportunities for students to increase their student connections within the school, and to the school. Having

another teacher as homeroom teacher also provides another important opportunity for students to be connected with another adult in our building. Students start their day both in the morning and in the afternoon in their homerooms. Our "GATOR AID" programming occurs two times per month on average in our homerooms where students work together on a school wide initiative, or a focus in the areas of literacy or numeracy. These are excellent opportunities for students to work collaboratively on an idea, or on a school wide initiative and in promoting an inclusive school environment.

With any school, changes to staffing is a reality, as well as with families moving. There are always some inevitable changes to some homerooms as some teachers will not be returning to Golden Gate. We also have students moving that need to be considered when we balance our homerooms. We have done our very best to accommodate student placements. Parents are encouraged to trust in the decisions made by the school. Homeroom placements as well as academic groupings for 2019-2020 will be included in your child's final report card in June.