



Cabot School

Eva M. Thompson, Interim Principal
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Dear Cabot Families in Grades K – 4:

One of the annual rites of spring at Cabot is to begin work on placing students in classes for the upcoming year. This takes time, thought and considerable energy to ensure that we create well-balanced groups of children who can work successfully together both educationally and socially. In order to accomplish this, we solicit input from many people who know students in a variety of settings. Our commitment is to create a process that is fair for all children and their families.

As always our primary goal is to create strong, heterogeneous learning communities, which are balanced in terms of gender, racial and ethnic backgrounds, learning and behavioral styles, social maturity, special needs and supportive peer groups. Such balance helps to foster the best possible learning environment for all children and to build on our strengths as a diverse community. Our placement process engages the input of literally every professional staff member who knows your child, and together, through a variety of team meetings at every grade level, we collaborate to build classrooms designed to enable each student to flourish academically and socially. Your involvement and support of this process is important, and as part of the partnership between home and school, we ask for your cooperation in the following ways:

1. If your child asks about class placement, we ask that you reinforce that placement decisions are the responsibility of teachers and the principal.
 2. In the spirit of fairness for our placement process, teachers have been asked to limit any conversations with parents about placement for the coming year. In turn, we request that you not ask your child's teacher, special education teacher or ELL teacher to consider a particular teacher placement.
 3. If you wish to request the placement of your child with certain friends, please list the names of **three** children on the accompanying form. Please remember, however, that a good friend is not always the best learning buddy. **If you list fewer than three children, we will not have adequate information and will be unable to honor your request.** Although we
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cannot make any promises, we will make every effort to place your child with at least **one** of these children. If you feel strongly that your child needs to be separated from another individual, please include that request on the form even if you stated this information in previous years.

4. Some parents may wish to share specific concerns or thoughts regarding their child's placement. Please **do not feel that you must** write a letter to ensure that your child will receive careful consideration, however, your input is valued. Although your child's teachers will represent your child's needs in the process, they may not always have most current information on friendships outside of school. Consequently, we have included a Parent Placement Form, **which must be submitted no later than May 5th - to enable its consideration in the placement process.** It asks parents to discuss the goals you have for your child, your child's learning style, as well as social issues. As you focus your comments on your child, please also **take care not to request a particular teacher by name as these requests cannot be honored. Although you submit the forms to me, they will be shared with the entire placement team, and it will also be given to next year's teacher.**

This is a very intricate, thoughtful, and time-intensive process that elicits input from many people who have in-depth knowledge of students. It is our best thinking that ultimately results in class lists that are designed to benefit all students. Therefore, once assignments have been made, **they are final.** Changing one child's placement after the fact can create an adverse "domino effect" that will undermine the carefully planned arrangement of an entire grade.

Finally, our classroom configurations and corresponding teacher assignments for next year are not yet confirmed. Based on the allocation budget for FY18 we have been assigned 20 classrooms for next year. Due to this uncertainty and the inevitable enrollment flux that occurs over the course of the summer, the release of placement letters and class lists for all Newton **elementary schools will be emailed sometime in late August.**

Thank you, as always, for your continued cooperation and support as we work together to plan the new school year ahead. Please contact me should you have any questions.

With best wishes,

Eva Thompson
