



TOTEM FALLS ELEMENTARY

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May 3, 2017

2017-2018 STUDENT PLACEMENT-ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

Dear Totem Falls Parents,

It is that exciting time of year when we look forward to the fun end-of-year events, the summer, and we begin to think ahead to the next school year. Many of our thoughts seem to focus on who will be teaching what grade level and where children will be placed for the upcoming school year. As a staff, we know your highest hope is that your children will be in a classroom with a caring and skilled teacher...and we want you to know that we share that goal.

As a staff, we believe all public schools throughout the country have a legal and ethical obligation to provide ALL students with well-balanced classrooms. The primary factors we consider in balancing our classrooms at Totem Falls Elementary are each student's perceived level of ability; current level of achievement in reading, mathematics, and writing; special needs; learning style; social skills and interactions; gender; race; and ethnicity. We believe that diversity makes our classrooms and our school strong and gives all of us the opportunity to grow and practice life skills. We also believe that the unique talents and needs of all our students are considered in their class placement. We further believe that our student placement process must include input from a variety of sources, must create balanced classrooms, and must alleviate class placement stress for all of us in the Totem Falls school community.

We would like to share the process we follow to place students in their new classes for the upcoming school year and hope this will provide you with a better understanding of how complex a balancing act this can be.

STEP 1: The first step in the process is to gather information and data about our students. We gather this information from parents, classroom teachers, specialists, and support staff. We also use assessment data and grades to assist in our placement.

In previous years, the Totem Falls staff have received many special requests for specific class and teacher placements. If we do not honor these request it is because our ultimate goal is to create balanced classrooms. Therefore, we respectfully ask that you do not request specific teachers on your *Student Placement Parent Input Form*.

All classroom teachers and resource teachers go through their list of current students and provide input on students' academic performance, behavior, and any special learning needs and/or characteristics. Our teachers identify students as academically strong, average, or challenged by grade

level curriculum. Our teachers identify any students who may need special assistance, whether it is remediation, enrichment, or extension of the grade level curriculum. In addition to academic performance, teachers also make note of student behavioral skills, identifying those who are strong leaders with peers, in need of support with peers, or challenged by group interactions. Our teachers also consider those children who need to be separated in order to do their best.

STEP 2: When the initial information has been gathered, your children’s current grade level team of teachers, resource teachers, and counselor meet with the principal to create the first draft of the upcoming year’s classes. The objective is to find the best placement for each student, based on all the factors for placement described above. As our staff works together to create these balanced classes, they factor in all the information about each student, gathered from all sources. Our top priority is to **create balanced classrooms focused on meeting all students’ needs.**

After the first draft of the class lists is completed, the teachers may determine that they need more input on certain students or that they need to come back at a later time to “re-look” at the balance of the classes. Upon receiving additional input or re-thinking some of the student placements, the principal will review the class lists. The class lists will be studied one last time by all staff members before they are finalized and printed.

STEP 3: The class placements will be shared prior to the **Annual Ice Cream Social** scheduled for Thursday, **August 31, 2017** at 2:00 PM to 3:15 PM. At this time, students and their parents will have the opportunity to meet their teachers.

We hope that by sharing this process, you will understand that we want and value your input in our student placement process. We hope that you understand that we will also use other information and data to make the best-informed decisions we can in our placement process. We further hope that you know we truly want what is best for ALL children, including yours, and that you will trust our knowledge and experience as we implement this placement process for the 2017-2018 school year. If you have questions, please feel free to contact one of us.

In addition, thank you for checking the box that applies to your child’s enrollment status for the 2017-2018 school year. It will help us determine our staffing needs for the upcoming school year.

Sincerely,

Hawk Cramer
Principal

Attachment: 2017-2018 Student Placement Parent Input Form, due back to Totem Falls on Friday, May 12, 2017.