

April 17, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians:

RE: The Formation of Classes for 2020-2021 and the Placement of Pupils in Classes

Soon we will be starting the process of drawing up “tentative” classes for the 2020 –2021 school year. It must be emphasized that the placements will be tentative, as late year and summer registrations will undoubtedly affect our actual September 2020 school organization. We once again ask any families that will not be returning to St. Nicholas in September 2020 to please inform the school office as soon as possible – this should be in an email to Mr. Cacciola – cacciolaa@hcdsb.org . I feel it is important to take the time to review with you the process for placement of students in classes so that parents have an understanding of the difficulties associated with this task.

A) The Issues Addressed in Student Class Placement

In forming class groupings, the following issues are given due consideration:

1. Equitable balance of boys and girls in each of the classes at any grade level.
2. A range of academic ability and potential in each class at any grade (i.e. classes are not “streamed”).
3. A range of academic and behavioral needs shared among classes at any grade (i.e. classes are not “streamed”. There is no class of academically challenged or disruptive students per se.)
4. **If possible**, we try to place a student in a “straight-grade” class if he/she is graduating from a “split grade” class. Please note that all students may end up in a split class at some point in time over their elementary schooling. **No student is exempted from such a placement possibility since to do so would consign other children in the grade to more frequent split class placements than is fair to them.**
5. Social considerations such as:
 - We do separate students for behavioral reasons and to promote academic independence in others.
 - We try to place a student with a friend or two. Note, this should not be taken to mean that a student would be placed with his/her “best” friend. Students can see each other at recess.
 - The dissolution of cliques is a goal when placing students.
6. Class size across the same grade levels are kept as equal as possible.

B) The Process

The classroom teachers at a given grade will meet as a group to form class lists for the next academic year based on the criteria listed above. These lists are taken ahead as proposals to the Principal. Alterations in class composition are discussed at this meeting. Lists are then re-drafted in light of these discussions and input from the Administration and the Special Education Department. The class lists then remain “tentative” pending necessary changes due to increased/decreased student enrollment. Class lists and school organization are not finalized until the Board’s Senior Administrative Staff approve of changes to the school’s plans based on increases or decreases in student population. Changes to school

organization and class lists are usually approved over the first two weeks of school in September and implemented immediately.

C) Special Placement Consideration

Should extenuating circumstances or special considerations affect class placement for your child/ren, please direct these, in writing, to me cacciola@hcdsb.org. This letter should outline the specific learning issues your child is experiencing. We needed to receive these no later than Friday, May 15, 2020.

In all fairness and candor, the mere preference for one teacher over another does not qualify as an extenuating circumstance or special need. As you know, staffing can change in June and over the summer and as such, **letters/emails specifying particular teachers will not be considered**. However, factors such as changes in family, living or marital arrangements, mental health, emotional and behavioral issues, serious illness and/or bereavement, unemployment or financial crisis, developmental concerns, as well as a history of difficulties with another pupil(s) and/or staff may well affect how a child functions and may require special placement consideration. **Names of students who you would like your child to be placed with will not be considered** as that placement may not be in that child's best interest. To repeat, we need to be contacted about these no later than Friday, May 15, 2020 – cacciola@hcdsb.org.

We apologize for the fact that we are unable to issue replies to placement letters/emails.

Thank you for your understanding.

Sincerely,

Mr. A. Cacciola
Principal
St. Nicholas Catholic School