



Oak Park Elementary School District 97

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TO: Dr. Carol Kelley, Superintendent, Board of Education

FROM: Dr. Amy Warke, Chief Academic and Accountability Officer

RE: Whittier Elementary School K/1/2 Multiage Classrooms Program Change

DATE: May 23, 2017

Type of Report: **Informational**

Purpose of the Report: To provide information about program change for Whittier Multiage Classrooms

Background Information:

More than 20 years ago, Mrs. Druckmiller and Mrs. Nelson studied and researched the multiage philosophy and attended the National Multiage/Looping Conference. Six teachers brought this philosophy to the Whittier School Community as an idea to consider for its' children. At that time, Whittier school community began a yearlong study that resulted in creating a plan for implementing the multiage philosophy for the students of the Whittier Community.

On Friday, April 21, 2017 parents of students who are currently in the Whittier multiage classrooms received an email referencing a change in how students will transition from the multiage classroom experience over the next three years to grade level classes while keeping the aspects of multiage that benefit children's learning. As questions arose, the Whittier School team responded to the parents' needs by hosting a meeting on May 2, 2017. Parents, the teachers of the K/1 and K/1/2 multiage classrooms, Mrs. Warner the school principal, and Dr. Warke, the CAO attended the meeting.

At the meeting Mrs. Nelson discussed how the program has evolved over the past 21 years from a true multiage format, to the need to switch by grade level for math, then years later switching for reading by grade level and then writing to today where the majority of teaching and learning is by grade level. The teachers further explained the reasons behind the need for the change, showed the parents a current schedule, how much time the students were currently experiencing multiage instruction and provided time for the parents to ask questions, and address concerns with the change.

The teachers presented a thoughtful transition plan that retains the values of multiage programming to the parents that will be phased in over the next three years.

2017-2018

Ms. Dunn will teach kindergarten (her current kindergarten and first grade students will join Mrs. Nelson's or Mrs. Druckmiller's classes as first and 2nd graders)

Mrs. Nelson will teach first/second grade multiage (her current students will remain)

Mrs. Druckmiller will teach first/second grade multiage (her current students will remain)

Mrs. Baker and Mrs. Villasin will teach Kindergarten

Mrs. Volz and a teacher replacing Mrs. Campbell will teach first grade

2018-2019

Ms. Dunn will teach kindergarten

Mrs. Nelson will teach first grade (Ms. Dunn's 2017-2018 kindergarten students will move as a group to first grade)

Mrs. Druckmiller will teach 2nd grade (Mrs. Druckmiller will keep her first graders and Mrs. Nelson's will join Mrs. Druckmiller's class)

2019-2020

Ms Dunn teaches kindergarten

Mrs. Nelson will teach first grade (Ms. Dunn's kindergartners move as a group to first grade)

Mrs. Druckmiller will teach 2nd grade (Mrs. Nelson's first graders will move as a group to 2nd grade)

The teachers ended their email communication to the parents with the following statement:

“Although we are sad to see the our current programming come to a close, we are confident that we will be able to continue with the aspects of multiage that benefit children's learning:

- team teaching
- multiage peer relationships
- 3 year experience with a team of teachers
- multiage group projects
- strong parent/teacher relationships

We know this is an unexpected change, but we believe all students will continue to thrive in the K-1-2.”