

Class Building & Parent Placement Requests at Monterey

- We ask that Monterey families **refrain from making class placement requests except in the most extraordinary of circumstances**
- In such extraordinary cases, it is important that **such requests be sent by email to our Vice Principal, Liz McMaster at lmcmaster@sd61.bc.ca by our April 30 deadline**, including:
 1. Your child's name & grade level in the next (2018-19) school year
 2. The nature of your placement request
 3. The extraordinary learning, social-emotional, and/or other needs warranting such special class placement consideration
- Note that no requests are guaranteed, but your request and rationale will be considered during our class building process if submitted by this deadline
- Please see the following description below regarding our rationale and processes in relation to class building, placement and change requests, timelines, etc.

Beginning in May of each year, Monterey Middle School engages in an extensive class building process for the subsequent school year. In doing so, we gather information and input from students' current teachers and we consider many factors, including: various intellectual, physical, social, and emotional needs of particular students; balancing the numbers of students as well as varying aptitudes and needs between classes; providing opportunities for enriched and remedial support; and much more . . . all aimed at creating balanced, diverse classes that provide the best overall educational setting for our students. With so many interrelated factors to consider, class building is a complex process only made more complicated by a high volume of parental placement requests.

Moreover, by middle school, we believe that students should be open to forming new peer relationships and that it's important for students to develop their skills to work with a wide variety of peers beyond their current social circle. Finally, in most circumstances, we believe that special placement requests can convey to children that we – their teachers, parents, etc. – prioritize classroom friendships and cliques over fostering an inclusive environment for *all* children, or that they don't have the resiliency to thrive without special accommodations, thereby decreasing their ability to be (or to become) more flexible and adaptable. Instead, we believe that our students are capable of working with and learning from the different personalities and approaches of varying peers and teachers throughout their many years of schooling. Through such an approach, we are striving to meet our students' long-term needs as well as further Monterey's positive culture as an inclusive learning community in which we all value, benefit, and learn from one another. Based on all of the above, we ask that parents only make a class placement request in extraordinary situations warranting special consideration.

Late requests (after April 30th) are far less likely to be accommodated because, once we begin building our preliminary classes, trying to accommodate further requests turns the class-building process into a "Rubik's Cube" in which accommodating one request can necessitate moving several other students, which in turn requires moving several more, which may ultimately benefit one child at the expense of others.

Students will be informed of their class assignment at the start of the school-year and, except in the most extraordinary circumstances, all class assignments are final. Once classes have been assigned, students/parents with particular concerns about their class placement may contact the principal about their concerns *only after trying their assigned class for the first two weeks of school*. However, please know that class changes are still very rare at this point since only a limited number of class changes, if any, are even logistically possible and, even if possible, not necessarily advisable given the impact of such changes to the balance and dynamics we've tried to create for all classes. Also, we wish to be fair to others with similar change requests, so we generally ask parents to work collaboratively with their child's teacher(s) and others to navigate concerns within their assigned class. Once again, we want to encourage parents to support their children in navigating (rather than removing) concerns, through which children at this age level further their problem-solving skills, capacity to cope with challenges, and overall resiliency.