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Thinking about Split-Grade Classrooms

As we embark upon a new school year, there have been a number of questions about split-grade classrooms and how students are assigned to them. We understand that, as parents, your primary concern is that your child's needs be met. This is our primary concern, too! We want each of our students to learn in an environment best suited to their needs, so school staff carefully consider gender, ethnicity, learning styles and other criteria when placing students. This year we have three split classrooms: two 2/3 splits (one each in Gen. Ed. and HCC) and one 4/5 HCC split.

Parents sometimes wonder how the needs of both grades can be met by one teacher. It is important to remember that even in a single-grade classroom, teachers are serving the needs of learners at a range of levels. Education researchers estimate that the typical classroom has a developmental range of five years. *Every* teacher, regardless of program, must plan for a variety of levels.

At Thurgood Marshall, the classroom teacher is not alone in teaching his/her students. Reading Interventionist Anne Lyons and Intermediate Interventionist Alison Miller both collaborate closely with multiple classrooms. Teachers of split classrooms work closely with other teachers at their grade levels so that small groups of students receive instruction from others. For example, 5th-graders in Mr. Miller's 4/5 split will go to 5th-grade-only classrooms for science and social studies.

There is a positive side to split-grade classrooms. A review of 56 research studies found no significant differences between student achievement in split-grade and in single-grade classrooms. In addition, students in split-grade classrooms scored just as well in their attitude towards school and self-concept. Some teachers report that students in split classrooms develop a stronger sense of independence and may benefit from the opportunity to expand their social group by making friends in another grade.

Ultimately, the best way to help your child succeed in either a split-grade or single-grade classroom is to establish a relationship with his/her teacher early in the year. If you do have concerns, it is best to share them with the teacher before sharing the concerns with your child. One thing we know about student success is that children need to have confidence in their teachers. When parents question or doubt aspects of schooling in front of their children, students lose faith in their teachers. This can have a negative impact on student motivation and/or performance. Having a clear picture of how the classroom is managed and how your child's specific needs are met will alleviate your concerns and help your child to feel comfortable in her or his new setting as well. Please know that we care about your child and do our best to give each student a rewarding learning experience.

If you have a child in one of our splits and continue to have questions, please contact Katie (for Shari Howard-Powell or Will Miller's classes) or me (Debby Halperin's class).

EVENT CALENDAR

TONIGHT, Thurs., Sept. 15: Curriculum Night, 6:30-8:30 p.m. *Child care at Washington MS for TM students with WMS siblings.* See Page 2.

Fri., Sept. 16: New Families Coffee & Tour, 8:15-9:15 a.m. Ask questions, meet other parents.

Sat., Sept. 17: School Board member Stephan Blanford community meeting, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., Capitol Hill Library, 425 Harvard Ave. E.

Sun., Sept. 18: Enrichment registration deadline. Plenty of options remain. See below.

Tues., Sept. 20: 3rd-Grade Potluck, 5:30-7 p.m. Siblings welcome! See page 2 for details.

Wed., Sept. 21: 2nd-Grade Potluck, 5:30-7 p.m. See page 2.

Wed.-Fri., Sept. 21-23: 5th-graders go to Camp Orkila. Have fun!

Fri., Sept. 23: Day of Caring. Volunteers will paint & landscape. Want to help?: <http://bit.ly/TMDoc2016>

Mon., Sept. 26: Enrichment classes begin.

→ Full year of events online at www.tmlink.org!

TUTU'S PANTRY

Week of Sept. 19: PEACE Academy and Kindergarten are asked to make a special effort to donate non-perishable foods. Donation bins are in the front hall. *While a different group of families is called upon each week, donations welcomed from all.*

Deadline is Sunday

Got Enrichment Yet?

Learning opportunity. Child care. Energy-burn. Enrichment classes often offer all three, but you must register by Sunday (Sept. 18) at tmlink.org/enrichment or through the form in our paper catalog. Your child can be more:

- **Sporty** (Basketball, Lacrosse, Tennis, Karate, Golf, Running Club).
- **Creative** (Mad Science/Fantastic Physics, Mixed-Media Art: Creating Upcycled Toys, Fashion Extravaganza).
- **Musical** (Guitar, Piano-Keyboard Club).

Important notes:

- **Scratch 2** (Gr. 4-5) has shifted to Monday afternoons.
- **Karate, Mandarin and Spanish** are fully available, but you must use the vendors' own registration systems. Details in the listings.
- **Aerospace Engineering** has a waitlist, but a 2nd section is possible if more kids sign up.
- **Scholarships** are still available!

Seeking our Next Group of Conflict Mediators



Counselor's Corner
Meghan Kaloper

This week I have introduced all 4th- and 5th-grade students to our Conflict Mediator and Recess Mentor opportunities! Both of these important jobs require an initial training and some challenging (but fun!) work. If your child is interested, please encourage him or her to apply (applications are available through classroom teachers) and return the form to me (Ms. Kaloper) or the classroom teacher.

Applications are due by Tuesday, Sept. 20. The training will be Monday to Friday, Oct. 3-7, 8:15-9:30 a.m. This training is required. We cannot provide transportation to school.

To learn about what it means to be a Conflict Mediator or Recess Mentor, please visit the counseling services overview page at: <http://marshalles.seattleschools.org/services/>. If you have questions or concerns, please get in touch with me: mrkaloper@seattleschools.org or 206-252-2808. I am in the building Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

The Best Volunteer Opps Are About to Be Yours...

Help TM run smoothly by volunteering for short-term projects or more.

Questions? Email volunteering@tmlink.org or visit <http://tmlink.org/info/volunteering/>.

Office: Our office staff really needs a hand sorting/filing first-day packets! Call Ms. Patu at 252-2800 or just stop by. Even 30 minutes makes a big difference!

Conflict Mediator Trainings (Oct. 3-7, 8:15-9:30 a.m.): Volunteers will help manage the classroom; assist with small group discussions; help facilitate conflict mediator role-plays with small groups, offer feedback to students, and more. (Also, training-packet assembly help needed by Sept. 29.) Sign up at <http://tinyurl.com/TMmentors>. Email mrkaloper@seattleschools.org with questions.

2nd-Grade Potluck Coordinator (Sept. 21): Facilitate setup/cleanup, be host-like. Email Zakiya: zakiyatyson@hotmail.com.

Health Screening (Oct. 11-12): Nurse Chin needs many volunteers to help with vision and hearing screenings serving all of our students. **Full days preferred, half-day shifts also welcome.** Sign up at <http://tinyurl.com/TMhealthscreen>.

Class Reps: Needed for the classrooms of Ms. Glass, Ms. Halperin, Mr. Miller, Ms. Gese, Ms. Damitio, Ms. Egelhoff, Mr. Paul. Email: volunteering@tmlink.org.

Tutu's Pantry Outreach: Help identify/recruit/coordinate companies or organizations that can provide food donations on a recurring basis. Email Maggie: maggietrapp@yahoo.com.



WMS Boundaries Changing

The lighter area in the map shows the proposed (smaller) geographic service area for Washington Middle School starting in 2017-18, when Meany Middle School on Capitol Hill re-opens. Thurgood Marshall HCC as well as Gen. Ed. Students will continue to be served at WMS. Dates for informational meetings include 6:30-7:30 p.m., Sept. 29, at Mercer Middle School, 1600 S. Columbian Way. Translation services available. Fuller info at <http://bit.ly/Boundaries2017>.

WMS Has Child Care Option for TM Curriculum Night

Washington Middle School is offering Curriculum Night child care to TM families who also have a WMS student. Care is open to school aged children, in the WMS Library. Games and computer access provided. Supervision provided by two dedicated school staff.

Bullpup Briefs

Yum! Grades 2 & 3 Hold Potlucks Next Week

Those dates for fun and food are Grade 3-Sept. 20 and Grade 2-Sept. 21. The PTA will provide water, plates and cutlery, and families should try to follow this plan:

If your student's last name begins with

- A-M: Main Dish**
- N-R: Side or Salad**
- S-Z: Dessert**

UW Young Scholars Center Offers Saturday Classes

The Saturday Program offered by the University of Washington Robinson Center for Young Scholars will open Fall course registration 8 a.m. Sept. 19. These classes are intended to provide intellectually ambitious K-8 students with challenge, inspiration and fun, in a collaborative, supportive learning environment. Offerings include philosophy, creative writing and astronomy. See <http://bit.ly/RobinsonSat> or contact Jill Duncan: jduncan1@uw.edu. Classes begin Oct. 15 and run 8 weeks.

Mon. is Deadline to Provide Info for Family Directory

Have you provided contact info for the Family Directory? Do it online by no later than Monday, Sept. 19. Start at <http://tmlink.org/dir/> or use the paper form. (No need to do both!) The email address you provide ensures you'll be on classroom and PTA e-lists. A free copy of the Directory will be sent home with every student next month.

Special Ed PTSA Hosting Meeting with District Official

The Seattle Special Education PTSA has set its general meeting schedule for 2016-17, all 7-9 p.m. in the auditorium at the John Stanford Center. On Sept. 27, hear District Chief of Student Supports Wyeth Jessee talk about recent staff changes and what's new in special education. Plenty of time for Q&A. Future meetings will be Nov. 1, Jan. 17, March 14 and May 16. Contact information for this PTSA is apparently in transition but a Facebook page under its name is sometimes active.