



Memorial-Spaulling School * 250 Brookline Street * Newton, MA 02459 * 617-559-9600
Tom Morris, Principal * Andrea Youngsman, Assistant Principal * Francie Sheehan, Executive Assistant

April 24, 2018

Dear Memorial-Spaulling Families,

Now that spring has arrived, it is time to begin work on placing students in classes for the upcoming year. It takes considerable thought, time and energy to create well-balanced groups of children who can work together both educationally and socially. In order to accomplish this, we will solicit input from many people who know students in a variety of settings.

It is our desire to create a process that is fair for all children and their families. With this in mind, our primary goal is to configure heterogeneous classes that are balanced in terms of gender, learning and behavioral styles, social maturity, special needs and supportive peer groups. With these components in place, we seek to foster healthy and productive learning environments.

In support of the partnership between home and school, we ask for your cooperation in the following ways:

1) If your child asks about class placement, we ask that you reinforce that placement decisions are the responsibility of teachers and the principal. Your child's present teacher has a year's worth of current, rich information and insight concerning how each student works best in school. That information, combined with data from specialists, provides the basis for placement.

2) Teachers have been asked to limit any conversations with parents about placement for the coming year. These conversations place undue expectations on teachers, and impact negatively on the fairness of the placement procedure. Please *do not* ask your child's teacher or special education teacher to consider a particular teacher placement for the following year.

3) Our responsibility as educators lies in creating balanced classrooms that support learning. Learning to make new friends is certainly an important skill in one's life. If a child should find him/herself placed in a classroom apart from his/her closest friends, new friendships will emerge during the school year. If you believe it necessary to request the placement of your child with certain friends, please list the names of at least four children. *If you list fewer than four children, we will not have adequate information and will not be able to honor your request.* Although we cannot make any promises, we will make every effort to place your child with at least one of these children. If you feel strongly that your child needs to be separated from another individual, please include that request on the form even if you have stated this information in previous years.

4) Some parents may wish to share specific concerns or thoughts regarding their child's placement. Please **do not feel that you must** return the Placement Form to ensure that your child will receive careful consideration. However, your input is always valued. Consequently, we use a Parent Placement Form that asks parents to discuss the goals you have for your child, your child's learning style, as well as social issues. The information

from this form will be shared with the entire placement team, and it will also be given to next year's teacher. Please focus your comments on your child. **Under no circumstances should you request a particular teacher either by name or by describing them so specifically that you identify an individual, as these requests cannot be honored.**

As I have stated, class placement is a very intricate and thoughtful process that elicits input from many people who have deep knowledge of students. It is our best thinking that ultimately results in class configurations that benefit all students. An enormous amount of time and energy goes into this important task. Therefore, once assignments have been made, they are final. Changing one child's placement after the fact can create an adverse "domino effect" that will undermine the carefully planned arrangement of an entire grade.

In an effort to ensure a smooth transition next year, a visiting time will be arranged in June so that children may meet with the teachers in the receiving grades. The entire grade level will meet with the receiving teachers in order to provide information and allow children to become familiar with next year's teachers. This will last for approximately 30 minutes during the school day.

Additionally, we continue to register new students at all grade levels and this typically continues throughout the summer. Due to the potential for summer enrollment shifts across the district, classroom placements will be sent home in mid to late August.

As always, we need your support to enable this process to work efficiently and benefit all students. Together we can effectively plan a successful year-to-come for our entire school. Thank you for your continued cooperation and support. Please contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Tom Morris
Principal

If you would like to complete a Parent/Guardian Placement Form please be sure to return it to school with your child no later than Friday, May 4th.