

3rd/4th Grade Blended Classes

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: WHY is the school district doing this?

A: The school district wants to provide more options for educational opportunities for our students. Our focus with the blended classroom is to improve academic achievement levels for all students, to provide differentiated instruction, strengthen social and emotional skill sets in addition to strengthening teaching practices.

Q: What are the benefits of blends?

A: There are many educational benefits including, but not limited to the following:

- Increased flexibility in creating small instructional groups designed to meet the academic needs of all learners.
- Increased placement options when developing class lists.
- Increased opportunities for differentiated instruction allowing teachers to better meet academic needs of all learners.
- Building strong positive relationships with teachers and classmates, increasing self-confidence and social skills.
- Less time necessary establishing routines and beginning of year expectations, allowing teachers to get started with curriculum more quickly.
- Older learners serve as role models and leaders, while younger learners can benefit from the support of their older classmates.

Q: How will blended class lists be determined?

A: In making these decisions, we continue to address the emotional and academic needs of every child. Classes will be determined by gender, academic levels, learning styles, and social skills. The goal is to create the best educational opportunity for our learners.

Q: What is a blended classroom?

A: A blended classroom is a multi-grade classroom that combines two or more grade levels into a single room, sharing much of the curriculum and classrooms happenings (recess, lunch, library, PE and Music). At Humbolt, our blended classrooms will allow for Math and Reading core instruction to be taught by separating students into grade level groupings, while Social Studies, Science, and Writing will be taught in the blended setting.

Q: Will the numbers in each classroom increase?

There will be four classrooms with 21 students in each classroom. Students will have two classroom teachers, one for their blended class and one for their grade level core instruction. In some cases, they may only have one teacher if they have the same teacher for their blended and core classes.

Q: How will the school ensure that students are making academic gains?

A: We will continue to follow current practices of school-wide testing at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. We meet every 8 weeks to review all students' data and make intervention changes and progress monitor as needed. The 3rd and 4th grade teachers will be reflecting on curriculum based assessments weekly, switching up groups and delivery of instruction as needed.

Q: Will my child still receive Title and Special Education services?

A: Yes, students will have similar schedules to the one they have this year. Challenge times for reading and math will remain the same, addressing individual student needs.

Q: How will a blended classroom be different from a regular 3rd or 4th grade classroom?

A: Changes will include blending the two grade levels for instruction in Science, Social Studies, Social Skills, Writing, Music and PE.

Q: How will my child manage transitioning between two classrooms?

A: The blended classrooms transition the same number of times as the other classes. Teachers will establish routines and procedures at the beginning of the year to assist with smooth transitions.

Q: Will my 4th grade student be challenged enough in a 3rd/4th blended classroom?

A: Students will receive core instruction for reading and math at their grade level. If a student is exceptionally high, they may pass a post test at the beginning of a new unit and be provided higher level content.

Q: How will teaching 3rd grade and 4th grade Social Studies and Science on alternating years affect my child?

A: The content for Science and Social Studies may be taught during 3rd or 4th grade, so alternating will not negatively affect your student. All students will be taught the content; some students will take off with the lessons taking the material to a higher level of thinking, while others may need more time understanding some of the concepts taught, similar to what we see happening in a single grade classroom. We will rotate the content on an A/B cycle, with the curriculum at the upper grade being covered this year and switching the following year.

Q: Will there be maturity differences?

A: Yes, but even in a typical classroom there is a wide variety of levels of maturity. Blending the two levels provides leadership opportunities for more mature students not found in a typical classroom.

Q: How will students manage conflict with classmates?

A: The blended classrooms as well as the other classrooms will be using the Second Step Social Skills curriculum during their scheduled blocks to help students gain skills in conflict resolution, mediation, communication and self-advocacy.

Q: Will my student be a tutor in the classroom?

A: Students will be provided academic material to assist them with improving their knowledge base. There may be times when students working together in groups are instructional leaders by choice. When we teach, we master the content at a 90% or higher rate, benefiting the teacher more than the learner.

Q: How will Music and PE work?

A: Students will receive Music and PE instruction in their blended classes. The schedule will remain the same. Each class will receive Music and PE instruction two times per week.

Q: What are next steps?

A: Humbolt's team met and discussed parent input from the parent meeting as well as information shared with Mrs. Smith when she personally tried contacting every parent that attended the meeting. We will have another parent meeting on June 19 from 6:30pm-7:30pm in Humbolt's cafeteria. Please contact Mrs. Smith if you have further questions or concerns. We will continue meeting and planning to ensure a great start to the 2017-2018 school year.