

Dear 2nd Grade Families:

We understand that “change” is the last thing you want to hear in relation to your 2nd grader’s experience at Charlotte Lab School. As the school leader and a fellow parent of a 2nd grade student, I can truly understand how disappointing it has been that this group of awesome students has continued to experience so many changes in their learning environment. However, I hope that you will agree that this is a change that isn’t being done *TO* them, but rather *FOR* them!

As I have shared on multiple occasions, our current 2nd graders have been a challenging bunch; their diverse needs and combination of high intellectual functioning and high energy have pushed our thinking in many ways, and we continue to learn from their experiences. While we have seen tremendous improvement in this group this year, we feel that they would benefit from a more structured experience, particularly as we try to close both academic and maturity gaps prior to their 3rd grade year, when testing begins and when higher expectations are established. In order to ensure that all students are successful, we are going to restructure their day so that it more closely aligns with the model we are very successfully implementing in kindergarten and first grades (and which, frankly, we now wish we had implemented with them when they were in 1st grade!).

Here is how it will work:

- Students will remain in their same homeroom classes and advisories (the new schedule/rotation will not impact enrichment or PE either);
- Following the same daily schedule as the rest of the school, students will rotate through the first three blocks of the day in newly created *learning groups* for these classes:
 - English Language Arts with Ms. Whitelaw
 - Math with Ms. Hollands
 - Quest with Mr. Hartzell;
- The learning groups are mixed groupings of students, which have been carefully balanced to ensure that students’ academic and behavioral needs will be met and that they will be supported at the appropriate academic level;
- All 2nd graders will have these same three teachers, which will enable the teachers to operate as a cohesive 2nd grade team, providing more structure and consistency for the students. You can also expect weekly team emails with curriculum updates and more consistency with student organization and communication regarding academic progress. Ms. Whitelaw will serve as 2nd grade team leader;
- Students will continue to have World Language classes with their current teachers during 4th block; and finally
- Ms. Miller will continue to serve full-time in support of the 2nd graders, additionally many 2nd graders will also have access to Ms. Newswanger for math support, Ms. Pollara for ELA support, Mr. Lanier for tech/Quest support, and Ms. Davino for academic intervention and enrichment.

We appreciate your support and flexibility as we implement these changes. We will speak with the students this week to let them know about the changes and will be careful to introduce this new structure as an opportunity and a privilege, taking great care not to make students feel like they are being punished or “treated like babies.” We feel this is a great opportunity for adults to model growth mindset and encourage you to emphasize these points at home as well when you discuss these changes with your child.

We are grateful for the faith you have put in us to make the changes that we feel are in the best interest of your children. We will keep you posted on our progress. Please feel free to reach out directly to me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Mary