

September 7, 2009

Dear Montlake Kindergarten and First Grade Parents and Guardians:

I realize that this letter may find you anxious about an important educational milestone – the beginning of your child’s kindergarten or first-grade year at Montlake. On Friday, September 4, we could not issue class assignments for kindergarten and first grade students. I am very sorry for the disappointment and inconvenience that must have caused, and I am writing to offer you an explanation of the unusual circumstances behind this situation.

During the final days of August, our office called families of all newly enrolled students at Montlake. Our calls revealed that the District’s enrollment projections (based on historical attrition rates) were not accurate: This year we expect to have an unusually large first grade class – 47 students, which is 7 more than is typical. Because Montlake’s current classroom structure relies on blended K/1 classes, the large first grade class also directly affects kindergartners.

In order to best provide for this large first grade class, for the past several days I have been seeking permission from the District for Montlake to create two full first grade classes and – by adding several kindergartners off of our waitlist – two full kindergarten classes. These classes would not be K/1 blends, but straight kindergarten and first grade classrooms. Unfortunately, District decision makers want to see actual enrollment numbers at Montlake and other schools in the central cluster – *i.e.*, they want to wait until school is underway – before they make a determination. Once again, I apologize that your family is affected by this uncertainty. Regardless of the outcome, Montlake’s committed teachers are prepared to offer your child a superb kindergarten or first grade experience.

For the first week of school, kindergartners will be assigned to one of two kindergarten classrooms – Ms. Yorde’s class, or Ms. Stump’s class. First graders will be assigned to either Ms. Forbes or Ms. Adams. If we move to two full classes for each grade, those will become permanent class assignments. If not, or if it takes the District several days to reach a decision, kindergarten students will be in these classrooms in the morning, and in blended K/1 classes in the afternoons. If our K/1 class sizes remain large, we will add appropriate support staff.

Kindergarten and first grade class assignments will be posted on the door prior to Tuesday’s Open House. Following the Open House, I will be available in the school cafeteria from 12 p.m. – 1 p.m. to answer your questions and provide you with any update I may have at that time.

Thank you for your patience. We are ready and excited to welcome your child to school on September 9!

Claudia Allan
Principal