



Combination Classes

A combination class is formed when students from two consecutive grades are placed in one classroom under the supervision of one teacher. Students in combination classes retain their respective grade-level assignments and receive appropriate grade-specific curriculum.

Why are combination classes formed?

The Fullerton School District seeks to maintain reasonable enrollment figures in each elementary classroom so that all students receive appropriate instruction, attention, and assistance. Combination classes are necessary for the following reasons:

- To implement state law which limits class size in grades TK-3
- To provide reasonable class size in grades 4-6
- To adhere to district class size ratios
- To accomodate school growth

What and how are children taught in a combination class?

The Common Core State Standards are the foundation of all instruction. In the basic skill areas of language and mathematics, children are grouped according to skill levels using grade-appropriate textbooks. In social science, concepts are often introduced to the entire class with the follow-up activities assigned with grade level materials. For instance, students might study map skills, but the independent follow up would be different for each grade level. In some cases, teachers specialize in a subject area and will team with other teachers. In this situation, students might work with a different teacher for a part of the day. Students in combination classes always have access to books for both grades. Instructional strategies in combination classes include whole class, small group, and/or individual instruction. Teachers carefully select appropriate instructional groupings, teaching methods, and materials for their students. These decisions are based on thorough on-going assessment. In all classrooms, when the teacher is working with a small group, other groups in the room are doing assigned work which has been designed for them.



How are students placed in a combination class?

Students are carefully selected and assigned to combination classes based on the following criteria:

- Student's academic success
- Student's ability to work both responsibly and independently
- Student's ability to work cooperatively with other students

Efforts are made to place all students in classrooms where they will succeed. Mastering grade level standards, achieving personal excellence, and becoming responsible decision makers are goals for all students. Opportunities for both academic and social enrichment are an integral part of a combination classroom. Every child has access to the high quality education programs offered by the Fullerton School District.

How can parents support their student?

Parents should exhibit a positive attitude about their child's classroom placement. Visit the classroom to become familiar with the instructional program, the teacher and the other students in the class. Encourage your student to take pride in his/her classroom and to take advantage of the unique opportunities available only to those students in combination classrooms. Help your student to understand that it is important to develop friendships and bonds just as he/she would when assigned to any classroom.

What does the research say?

1. Research shows there is no difference in academic achievement between children in combo classes versus single grades.
2. Students in combo classes can be more cooperative with one another.
3. Children learn at different paces. A wider range of curriculum is available in a combo class.
4. Younger students gain self-confidence, and older students learn to be positive role models.
5. There is greater peer-to-peer learning in a combination class.
6. Students develop friendships across grade levels and build a sense of community.