

Elmwood School

May 30th, 2014

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As we begin to look ahead to next year, I want to communicate a key change that will be taking place at **Elmwood School**. The purpose of my communication is to provide you with an overview of the change, a rationale for the change, and how the change will positively affect students.

The Hopkinton School District, kindergarten through grade 8, is excited to move toward a co-teaching special education model. Co-teaching is a service delivery vehicle for providing students with special education services within the context of the general education classroom. Depending on the school and age level, the model may vary slightly; however, the goal of moving to a co-teaching model remains the same for all schools: ensuring improved student outcomes.

What will the co-teaching model look like at Elmwood School? Next year, at Elmwood School, there will be three co-teaching classrooms; one in grade two, and two in grade three. Working in partnership, a learning specialist and a classroom teacher will share responsibility of the students in a classroom and work together to effectively maximize learning for all students. The co-teachers will collaborate to make decisions, divide responsibilities to be efficient, and share accountability for their students' learning. Furthermore, the low student teacher ratio will benefit all students in the classroom.

Next year in the co-teaching classrooms, the learning specialist will only be responsible for servicing students in the co-teaching classroom he/she is assigned to teach. The learning specialist **will not** be assigned to teach in multiple classrooms. As a result, the learning specialist's special education caseload will be between 6-8 students, the learning specialist will only need to co-plan with one teacher, manage only one classroom schedule, and will work to support all students in the classroom in partnership with the classroom teacher. Again, all students will benefit from an outstanding student to teacher ratio and from having two teachers with complimentary skill sets.

Will all special education students receive special education services through the co-teaching service delivery model? No. In addition to the co-teaching model, Elmwood School will continue with an inclusion service delivery model. In grade two, there will be two inclusion classrooms, and in grade three, there will be one inclusion classroom; which will be serviced by a learning specialist. This differs from co-teaching, as the learning specialist is providing services across multiple classrooms and schedules, and planning with multiple teachers. Special education students in an inclusion classroom will be provided services as outlined on their Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). While the learning specialist is providing specialized instruction to students, a paraprofessional will be providing students' with accommodations in one of the other inclusion classrooms.

The Director of Student Services, Marijane Hackett and Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Cathy MacLeod will present an overview to explain the philosophy behind co-teaching Tuesday, June 3, 7-9 PM at the

High School Library and Wednesday June 4, 7-9 pm at the Middle School Library. These forums are intended to provide an opportunity to learn more about co-teaching and answer any questions you may have.

Elmwood School is excited about this step toward moving to a co-teaching model. We believe the introduction of this model will benefit all students in the co-teaching classroom and provide all students with what they need to grow and learn. I am available if you have any questions, concerns, or ideas about the co-teaching model.

Respectfully,

David Ljungberg