

# Information about Learning Communities and Creation of Classes For the 2017-2018 School Year

During the 2016-17 school year, we reorganized the physical structure of our building from grade levels being located next to each other and on the same schedule to Learning Communities (Seekers, Discoverers, and Explorers) comprised of one second grade, one third, one fourth and one fifth grade class. Our fourth Learning Community, the Panther Cubs, is comprised of our kindergarten and first grade classes.

We made these changes because of our continuous goal to personalize learning for our students. Students learn and grow at different paces. Since our Learning Communities teach Literacy and Math at the same time, our goal is to eventually 'break-down' grade level walls so that students can move as quickly, or take as much time as they need to master grade level content. Communities have begun taking small steps toward this goal by doing special projects together, instructing small intervention groups, and holding Number Talks across grade levels.

Research shows relationships between students and teachers, as well as student to student, have a positive impact on student achievement. At Scioto Darby, we have always valued teacher and student relationships, and transitioning to Learning Communities allows us to foster staff relationships as well. In Communities, students get to know multiple teachers, and the teachers get to know the students as they transition through the years. Students are building relationships with other students in different grade levels. This helps create a welcoming, inclusive, family environment.

Each of our classes are made up of mixed ability groups of students. We create balanced classes that support all students' academic and emotional needs. This is a task that we take very serious and give careful consideration to student placements. Since February we have been looking at students' academic needs, personalities, learning styles, and also considered parental input. All of these factors are used to develop class lists. Students with unique learning needs, such as gifted services or special education, are placed on matching Communities where those services are clustered, but all Communities include students with low, average, and high academic ability levels. Some of our students will remain in the same Community next school year, and some will be moved to new Communities based on insights we've gained about those students this year. Each of these placements were made with the best interest in mind for each individual child. As new children join our school, we will implement a multiple day process of welcoming them into the Scioto Darby family, and getting to know them before we place them in a class.

We are sharing information about Learning Communities now because we want to make sure we get things right for each child. Our goal is to keep you informed and connected. We look forward to partnering with you for your child's education.

Your child will remain on the **Seekers Learning Community** next year.