



# ORCHARD GROVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Growing Strong Thinkers, Caring Hearts & Healthy Bodies

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Dear OGES Families and Friends,

Exciting news! OGES will have one multigrade classroom containing both 4th and 5th grade students next school year. This is a unique opportunity for the school allowing us to be innovative in our approach with students as well as with our resources. This design has us consider each learner's strengths and needs as we look specifically at standards rather than a holistic, grade level. Using a competency-based approach will provide the students avenues for personalized learning which eventually could lead to blended learning (a goal for OGES). With this approach and carefully created plans, students will have choice in how to engage and demonstrate their learning while at the same time giving them more student agency. With flexible and fluid groupings, the pace of learning can be customized as well. Having this classroom design ensures more forward thinking about students' future in middle school and beyond.

We have selected a teacher who has most recently taught 5th grade but also has several years teaching 4th grade. She is excited and anticipating this experience. Mrs. West has embraced and followed our school initiatives as a leader in the building but also as a parent. We will be receiving support from the district for Mrs. West in how to assess and instruct in the two grade levels' standards in order to achieve the greatest academic impact. With support from FCPS Curriculum Specialists and our own in-house specialists, we expect this classroom to be one where everyone succeeds and excels.

So what will this look like? A day in the life of a student in this class will look like many classrooms here already. Students will receive reading/writing instruction at their level from Mrs. West. In math, we will look for similarities in standards for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades for whole group instruction. Then, for differentiated instruction, groups will be led by Mrs. West and a co-teacher. Our intent is to have this be a unified class while meeting and appropriately expanding grade level standards for each student. For science and social studies, one grade level will remain with Mrs. West while the other will be distributed to the grade level teachers. The class will travel to specials together and each grade level will eat lunch with their grade level peers.

OGES will be doing its grouping of students in early June and will consider this classroom's makeup/composition of students early on. We will be careful to construct a classroom that is heterogeneous while providing the supports needed so that this is a positive and exciting process for everyone. Families of selected students will be notified of their participation in the classroom and a meeting will be set to offer additional information and/or allow for questioning/clarification by the middle of June.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact us so that we can meet your needs in this regard. We are proud of the work being done at OGES and continue to value your partnership with us for the coming school year. As the summer can sometimes bring additional staffing changes, we will send a letter to all families by August 1, 2019 with your child's classroom teacher and dates/times for Open House and Back to School Nights.

Your administrative team,  
Shirley Olsen and Jennifer Hyde