



Questions/Comments about the Tuscany Whole School Multiaging Approach

Thank you to our families who submitted responses to our survey. We are grateful for your reflections and questions, which help us to think about and plan carefully for student success. We have summarized the most frequently occurring questions and comments that families provided to us through the survey and hope these responses will help to keep you informed.

Q: Why are you deciding to do this with only two months of school remaining? Isn't it too fast?

A: Each year in March, school administration and staff hold discussions about plans for the next year's school organization. These discussions began with teachers in February and at the March and April Tuscany School Council Meetings, Mrs. White spoke about the planning which had been started with staff to move to a Multiage Whole School Approach.

Q: Isn't this change unnecessary additional work for the teachers? Especially after such a challenging year with the pandemic?

A: Tuscany School staff have been teaching through concept-based approaches to learning for the past 5 years. The multiage whole school approach is a natural fit for this approach. In June, teachers began working in teams to plan for next year. Teachers are motivated and excited to work in this way. All our experienced staff have experience working in a multiage approach, many at Tuscany School, when the school utilized this approach previously. Staff who are newer to teaching or new will have extra support to ensure they understand the approach and also have their Tuscany Team of more experienced teachers with which they will work closely. Collaboration has always been key to our success at Tuscany School and this doesn't change with the implementation of the Multiage approach.

Q: Exactly which grades will Multiaging start in?

A: For the 2021-2022 School year, Tuscany School will be organized for:

- 1 AM class of English Kindergarten
- 1 PM class English Kindergarten
- 2 AM classes of French Immersion Kindergarten
- 1 PM class of French Immersion Kindergarten
- 4 classes of Grade 1/2 English
- 4 classes of Grade 1/2 French Immersion
- 5 classes of Grade 3/4 English
- 2 classes of Grade 3/4 French Immersion
- 1 class of Grade 4/5 French Immersion
- 2 classes of Grade 1-6 Enhanced Educational Supports

Q: How does looping work? What if there is a need for a child to NOT stay with the same teacher/group of students for two years? I like the idea of looping but am wondering if there will be options if there is a difficult match (teacher/child or child/child as well)? What if the teacher and child are not a good fit, is it possible to change instead of loop?

A: Class lists for the 2021-2022 school year were created as we normally do, each year, creating a balanced group of learners, taking into consideration what we know about each child and making informed decisions in their best interests and how they can be most successful. With the multiage approach, “looping” will occur at the start of 2022-2023 school year. We know there may be a need to make some changes and parent and teacher feedback is certainly welcomed and considered when we are planning for the next school year.

Q: The examples explained about the implementation of the Science and Social Studies curricula. Why weren't there any examples in the videos about math?

A: The focus in the videos on Social Studies and Science curricula was meant to show the ways that the concepts from the topics in these particular Programs of Study integrate and often overlap. Mathematics and Language Arts are areas in which a child's learning occurs on a continuum. Teachers already, and will always, provide very personalized instruction and learning opportunities in Mathematics and Language Arts, whether or not a child is in a single grade or multi grade classroom configuration. Whenever a child is ready for more challenging concepts in Numeracy and Literacy, we must respond to their specific needs. The same is true if a child requires additional supports in these areas.

Q: Will students have an opportunity to play with other students from other classes again? This year it was difficult for them to make friends when they couldn't play together.

A: The restrictions and cohorting of classes this year was due to the need for Covid-19 health and safety protocols. We will learn more in August about the AHS and CBE guidelines for the upcoming school year, however, we are hopeful for and do anticipate opportunities to be able to bring students together in meaningful ways next school year.

Q: How will this work in French Immersion with some of the kids knowing less French than the others? Won't that be hard on the kids who know less French?

A: Within any classroom, teachers are working with a variety of learners with a wide range of abilities. Teachers at Tuscany know how to assess and will personalize learning for every child in their care based on their particular strengths and needs. Our French Immersion teachers will continue to use the Neurolinguistic Approach to language acquisition to develop students' capacity in oral comprehension, speaking, reading and writing. Starting the fall of 2020, we will also have a French Immersion Learning Leader that will support students through focused and intentional work.

Additional Comments from families:

- I don't have any questions right now but am interested to see how it goes.
- Thanks for providing the videos and explanations.
- I just want to make sure my kids are being challenged in their learning.
- The videos were very informative.
- It looks to me to just be split classes dressed up on fancy jargon.
- I don't have any experience with this so I'm in a wait and see.
- No questions, the videos said it all.
- My one suggestion is to continue to ensure that expectations for each grade level are fair and developmentally appropriate.
- The approach sounds reasonable and I can appreciate the potential benefits. Thank you!
- I don't understand why we would make this change. If class size is the reason, I would be happy with larger single grade classes rather than multiage classes.
- Disappointing.
- I am wondering if after 2 years of disrupted learning, if implementing this will potentially lead to another disrupted year of learning.
- We have heard from other parents who are also in the French program with kids in a split class and they said their children are falling behind. This is not something we want to deal with.
- My son previously attended a school that utilized this method and I found it to be wonderful. I am looking forward to this change next year.