



## *Steward Elementary School*

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*261 Perkins Row Topsfield, MA 01983 978-887-1538 Trudy Dooner, Principal*

March 4, 2009

Dear Parents,

It is the time of year when we begin to think about student placement for the 2009-2010 school year. All personnel involved in placement spend a great deal of time, effort and energy considering the factors that will help determine the best placement for each child, and the best grouping of students within each class. I will ask for input from classroom teachers, specialists, the guidance department, other appropriate school personnel and parents.

We are committed to creating balanced classes so that each one represents a microcosm of the total school community. A balanced class takes into consideration the ratio of boys to girls; a range of academic achievement, abilities and interests; and a range of social maturity. We consider a variety of factors in grouping students, including: placing students with at least one peer from this year's class, separating individuals, and placing an assortment of personality types in each class. Because our goal is to build classes where all students thrive and grow academically and socially, and because the process is so complex, parent requests for placement with individual students cannot always be honored.

Parental input is welcome. Especially helpful to us is information about a student's specific need or learning style. If you have information to share, write a letter indicating the single most important factor you would like us to consider. If you have more than one factor, please prioritize them. All letters are reviewed many times before the class lists are finalized. Send your letter to the office to my attention no later than **Friday, April 17**. Letters received after this date will not be considered because our placement process begins right after the deadline. Making changes in placement after the process has begun because of letters received after the due date compromises not only the hours already invested, but other documented priorities as well. Writing a letter is voluntary and you can be assured that the same care and consideration will be given to the placement of each child whether or not a letter is sent.

Please note that your comments will be shared with teachers after I have read them. Also note that **requests for individual teachers cannot be honored**, and letters that name individual teachers will be returned. The process of placing students is multi-faceted, rendering it impossible to honor parental requests for specific teachers.

Once again, I encourage you to use the letter writing process as a way to convey important information about your child. Please understand that I cannot take calls or schedule conferences regarding specific placement requests. As always, let me assure you that we at Steward understand the importance of student placement and will continue to seriously weigh all available information in order to create classes where every student will be happy and successful.

Sincerely,

Trudy Dooner