

Port Angeles School District
Revised Report
Multi-Age Classroom Committee
November 13, 2009

HISTORY OF MAC

The Multi-Age Community was initially formed in 1978 when staff moved into the newly renovated Franklin Elementary. It was originally called the “Alternative Primary” and structured to accommodate first through third grades for students across the district. An additional class was added each year until the program reached fifth grade. The name was changed to the “Alternative Program”, or AP, when the fourth grade was added. Confusion in the community regarding the nature of the program—some believe due to the similarity in name with the Advanced Placement program at Port Angeles High School—motivated the name change to Multi-Age Classroom (MAC) about 1986. Program founders indicate they always intended this to be an “alternative” program for elementary students, despite it picking up the reputation in the community as a gifted program.

ELEMENTARY TRANSITION AND RE-BOUNDARY

During the 2006-07 school year, the transition team determined that Franklin Elementary would become a two unit school with the third unit being a classroom in the MAC program. This configuration with the re-boundary created a three unit school at Franklin. This determination provided for the re-boundary decision to make Franklin Elementary a two unit kindergarten with the exception of years when a bubble occurs. This provides for a fluctuation in the number of available spots in the MAC program. It is also recognized that students who have attended grades first through fifth in the MAC may choose to remain at Franklin for grade six. (See <http://www.portangelesschools.org/parents/ElementaryTransitionTeam.html> for Transitions 2007: Reports 2, 3, 6)

The 2009-10 MAC enrollment is detailed below:

Current grade level and program implementation: * indicates students in the MAC

- Grade 1: 2 sections in regular education + 1 MAC = 3 sections (22, 22, *21)
- Grade 2: 2 sections in regular education + 1 MAC split 2/3 = 3 sections (21, 20, *11, *10)
- Grade 3: 1 section in regular education + 1 MAC split 2/3 = 2 sections (27, *15, *16)
- Grade 4: 2 sections in regular education + 1 MAC split 4/5 = 3 sections (21, 20, *9, *10)
- Grade 5: 1 section in regular education + 1 MAC split 4/5 = 2 sections (28, *18, *19)

Current Staffing: Total of 13 teachers which is 2 fewer teachers due to decreased enrollment.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Multi-Aged Community currently serves approximately 129 elementary aged children in grades one through five of the total 318 students in grades one through five. Teachers, community volunteers and supportive parents work together in grade level and multi-aged

settings designed to develop independent lifelong learners. The MAC is a District Elementary Alternative Program open to all students in the district as space permits.

In the multi-aged community, students are expected to be responsible for their learning and behavior. They are guided in their learning to become disciplined, motivated, and confident in their abilities. Children are encouraged to rely upon themselves and to cooperate and share with others.

The curriculum is based on school district and state guidelines and student interest areas. Basic skills, as well as critical thinking and problem solving, are vital components of the program. Students are expected to work to achieve district and state standards in all subject areas. Flexible grouping and room arrangement allow a variety of teaching strategies to be used to assist students in successfully reaching their full potential in all areas.

ENRICHMENT CLUSTERS

Enrichment Clusters allow multi-aged groups of students who share a common interest to come together during specially designated time blocks to produce a product, performance or targeted service based on that common interest. Clusters usually last for two-three weeks and are held twice a year. Parents and community volunteers facilitate Enrichment Clusters as they evolve according to each particular group's interests and needs.

PARENT EXPECTATIONS

As in any classroom, parents are expected to keep informed of their child's progress throughout the year by phone calling, visiting the classroom, attending conferences, and looking at work brought home. Parents are encouraged to volunteer and be involved in the classroom in the following ways:

- Weekly classroom helper, clerical work, work with students
- Enrichment clusters, planning team, cluster facilitator/assistant
- Fundraising project
- Field trips chaperone
- Representative to PTO

PLACEMENT REQUESTS

A brochure and a request form are available from the Franklin Elementary Office or the Port Angeles School District Central Services Building, 216 East Fourth Street, during the enrollment period. Parents are expected to visit the MAC to observe and have a first-hand experience in this setting during parent visitation week at Franklin. Specific enrollment and visitation dates are announced in advance. Parents are encouraged to learn more about the program by attending a public evening meeting in February for an introduction to the program.

MAC teachers determine the number of openings at each grade level in the spring and a random lottery drawing is used to select students for placement in the program for the following year.

TRANSPORTATION

Students living outside of Franklin's attendance area are responsible for their own transportation.

COMMITTEE PURPOSE AND RECOMMENDATION

In August 2009, Superintendent Dr. Jane Pryne requested the Multi-Age Classroom (MAC) Committee be formed to examine the MAC program and provide her with recommendations regarding the program as it is currently configured. The committee will provide Dr. Pryne with recommendations in March of 2010.

The Superintendent has asked the Committee to study and report several program implications as they relate to MAC and Franklin as well as the other elementary programs:

- How is instruction in the MAC different/same as other instruction at Franklin?
- How is instruction, to meet state standards, best taught in a multi-age classroom?
- How does assessment impact the concept of a multi-age community?
- What does it mean to be a "District Program"?
- How does the MAC affect the culture at Franklin Elementary School?
- How are district students invited to participate in MAC?
- How are students selected to enter MAC?
- How are younger siblings entered in to the MAC?
- Do students living in the Port Angeles School District boundary have priority over out of boundary students to enter the MAC?
- How are class sizes balanced when there are less than or more than three units of students at a grade level?
- How are teachers selected to be a part of the MAC?

The list above is a sample of questions that may be examined by the MAC Committee and it is recognized that others will surface as the program is reviewed and discussed.

MAC TEAM COMPOSITION

Principals, staff, and parents in the Franklin Community along with other staff from the Port Angeles School District will be responsible for studying the history and current educational conditions that contribute to the implementation of the MAC program.

MAC COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP	
Area of Representation	Member
Facilitator and District Office Representative	Mary Hebert
Franklin Principal	Amity Butler
Principal from outside of Franklin	Michelle Olsen
Teachers from the MAC	Claire Rausch (intermediate) Lambert Grimes (primary)
Teacher from Franklin	Maria Kays
Teacher outside of the MAC and outside of Franklin	Sharon Fritschler
Historical Perspective	Hester Hill
MAC Parents	Carrie Cobb Kelly Heim
School Board Representative	Patti Happe Cindy Kelly

TIMELINE		
Date	Location	Time
November 17, 2009	Franklin Elementary	4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
December 1, 2009	Franklin Elementary	4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
January 12, 2010	Franklin Elementary	4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
January 26, 2010	Franklin Elementary	4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
February 9, 2010	Franklin Elementary	4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
February 23, 2010	Franklin Elementary	4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.