

Combined Classrooms

Why is my child in a combined class?

Principals and staff create combined classes as an organizational tool to meet the Ministry of Education's standards for class size. A variety of other factors are considered when grouping children into classes, including:

- Learning styles
- Social skills
- Academic strengths and needs
- And many other factors



All classrooms, whether single-grade or combined, include students performing at a range of achievement levels.

Example: a single-grade class of Grade 4 students may have students ranging in ability from multiple grades.



How can the teacher teach more than one grade at a time?

Teachers in HWDSB use many different strategies to meet students needs at various levels. Teachers use various strategies to meet expectations related to the students Grade Level in the Ontario Curriculum. These may include:

- Introducing a common topic then giving each grade a different task or problem
- Organizing students into flexible groups depending on student interests and skills
- Differentiate instruction based on students' individual strengths and needs

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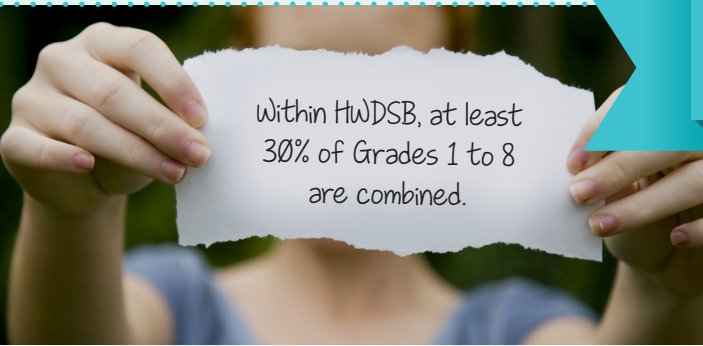
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An Introduction to *Combined Grades*



Combined Classrooms



Within HwDSB, at least 30% of Grades 1 to 8 are combined.

Combined classes group children from two or more consecutive grades in one classroom. This type of classroom is very common. Within HwDSB, at least 30% of Grades 1 to 8 are combined.

Schools combine classes for a variety of reasons. This includes organizing classes to meet student learning needs and combining grades to balance class size.

Over the years, HwDSB has found that using combined grades as a strategy, has reduced the number of timetable reorganizations that occur in late fall.

All classrooms include students with a range of skills and abilities. Combined classes are neither better nor worse than single-grade classes. They are simply one of the many ways schools meet students' academic and social development needs.

How will a combined class affect my child?

Academically

Several studies have found that students in combined classes achieve at the same level as students in single-grade classes.

Socially

Canadian studies also show that children in combined classes have the same opportunities for emotional and social growth as single-grade students.

The social environment helps students:

- Learn how to work on their own and as part of a team
- Build leadership abilities as they work together and help each other
- Develop decision-making skills, and become more self-motivated and responsible
- The diverse ideas and opinions of classmates help expand students' perspectives and help them learn in an environment that reflects the real world
- Combined grades provide more flexibility for classroom composition



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Will my child get enough individual attention?

Teachers teach students and address each individual's strengths and needs, regardless of the grade level.

Every day, in both single-grade classes and combined grades, teachers work with large groups, small groups, and individual students.