

Do students progress in combination classes?

Throughout the years it has been necessary to have many combination classes in schools in the Orange Unified School District. Students' achievement in these classrooms, as measured by standardized tests, equals the achievement in single-grade classrooms.

In addition, research has established that:

- ❖ Combination classes are particularly effective when the participating students are carefully selected.
- ❖ Combination classes may have a more positive impact on social growth and the development of independent learning skills than single grade classes.



How can I support my child in a combination class?

Parents can support their children in the same ways they would in a single grade class. Staying interested and concerned about school work and activities, monitoring your child's homework keeping in touch with the teacher and attending the school whenever possible are ways parents can support their child's learning. If you have concerns about your child's learning, you should speak to the classroom teacher.

Orange Unified School District

Elementary Education



Parent Information

Elementary Combination Classes



Combination Classes



What is a combination class?

A combination class is combining two grade levels in one class. This configuration exists in many of our elementary schools. Combination classes are a common occurrence, so it is important to understand why they are formed and how they work.

Why do we have combination classes?

Combination classes are simply the result of how many students come to a school at a given grade level. Students, however, don't come to us in neat numbers. When we have too many students for two single grade level classes and not enough for three, a combination class must be created. Numbers of students at one grade level also affect every other grade level in the school, so combination classes reflect the total school enrollment. The school principal must look at the total enrollment when setting up grade level configurations for the entire school.

How are students assigned to combination classes?

Principals and teachers assign all students based on their professional assessment of where and with whom a child will have the greatest opportunity for success. They review the student's academic success, ability to work responsibly and independently, as well as, the child's social development and ability to work cooperatively with other students.

How do combination classes differ from single level classes?

In reality, they don't. Students assigned to combination classes receive the complete curriculum appropriate to their grade level, as do the students in single grade level classes. All students have opportunities to extend their learning based on individual abilities and achievement. All students have learning experiences in which they function independently or cooperatively in groups. In all classes, teachers will work with the whole class and at times work with students in small group or individually.

A key component to a combination classroom is the emphasis on sense of community. The closer the community atmosphere, the more secure the children feel.

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

Teachers use many different strategies to teach students in combined grades. They may:

- ❖ Introduce a common theme then give each grade a different task or problem. This approach is utilized in the new Common Core State Standards.
- ❖ Break students into groups to study different problems and report back to the class. These groups can be flexible, including students with varied interests and skills.
- ❖ Bring students together as a group for activities like health, physical education, and the arts.

