

Hello, Harrison Parents:

Here at Harrison Elementary School, we are excited to continue providing a high-quality education to all of our students by expanding Personalized Learning (PL) to all classrooms for the 2016-17 school year.

**What is Personalized Learning?** Simply put, Personalized Learning helps students take ownership and become co-designers of their learning within the framework of the Common Core State Standards. The structure of PL can be summed up in these three questions:

- What standard are you going to learn?
- How are you going to learn it?
- How are you going to show me your learning?

With this framework, the answers to these questions can be personalized to meet the needs of each student.

**Why Personalized Learning at Harrison?** Our focus is always what is best for each of our students at Harrison Elementary. This student-centered focus allows us to shift our instructional framework to be able to spend more one on one time with your child to help guide them in their learning process, and help them take ownership of their education to become successful learners.

**How will this impact your family?** As always, your child will continue to receive an excellent education from Harrison's high-performing staff. That will not change. This year we provided a 4th/5th grade multi-age classroom. For next year, we will also be able to provide a team-taught multi-age class for students entering the kindergarten and first grades. This opportunity does not replace the single grade classroom, but rather it expands the number of educational alternatives available at Harrison Elementary School to help all of our students be successful. There will be a total of two multi-age classrooms with all the remaining classrooms serving a single grade. However, all classrooms will incorporate Personalized Learning components into their instructional framework.

**How are class lists determined?** School staff will balance homerooms for next year the way we have done it for the past five years. The current grade level teachers and I will use academic and behavioral data to place students into homerooms that are balanced. We will then combine one kindergarten and first grade homeroom list to form the K/1 multi-age class. Current 4th grade multi-agers will have the opportunity to loop with the class and will be combined with a homeroom list of current 3rd graders to form the 4/5 class for next year. Just as in the past, when looking at class lists, we will ensure the best fit for your child.

If you'd like to learn more about PL at Harrison, there is a video on our Harrison homepage that goes over it more in detail. I encourage you to check it out. I've also attached a copy of our PL "Frequently Asked Questions" for your review. As always, please feel free to contact me directly with any questions. And rest assured that all teachers and staff at Harrison are committed to the academic, social, and emotional success of your child.

Sincerely,  
Mrs. Grandt  
Principal



## Frequently Asked Questions

**If Personalized Learning gives kids choices about what they're learning and how they learn it, will s/he be able to just research Minecraft or basketball all day?**

No. While students engaged in Personalized Learning have more voice and choice into their learning, that voice and choice is still given within a framework decided upon by the teacher. Students will still be working toward mastery of the Wisconsin Common Core State Standards.

**Do students in Personalized Learning classrooms still take tests?**

Yes. Students in Personalized Learning classrooms still participate in the required state and district tests. And traditional tests will still be one way that students can demonstrate to their teachers that they have mastered a standard. However with Personalized Learning, students have additional ways they can choose to demonstrate mastery, such as creating a project or creating their own test with an answer key. How students demonstrate mastery is one component of the voice and choice of Personalized Learning.

**Will my student be prepared for middle school using Personalized Learning?**

Yes. Instruction is based on the Wisconsin Common Core State Standards. These standards are part of the scope and sequence used to prepare all students in Wisconsin for middle school.

**My child doesn't like to do crafts and projects. Will s/he be successful with Personalized Learning?**

Project-based learning (PBL) is one facet of Personalized Learning. PBL is a dynamic classroom approach in which students actively explore real-world problems and challenges and acquire a deeper knowledge about what they are studying. The projects for PBL are not crafts. Project-based learning simply refers to different ways students can research and explore topics and concepts during the school day in order to demonstrate an understanding of the material they've learned in ways other than just a traditional test. Again, projects such as these are just one part of Personalized Learning.

**If my student is in a single grade classroom, will they have opportunities for Personalized Learning?**

Yes. Personalized learning opportunities will be implemented in all K-5 classrooms including Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs) based on student interest, learning style, and assessment data.

**My child struggles with unstructured times and disorganization. Can s/he be successful in a multi-age classroom?**

Yes. The multi-age classrooms still have a daily schedule and a structure. This student-centered focus allows us to shift our instructional framework to be able to spend more one on one time with your child to help guide them in their learning process, and help them take ownership of their education to become successful learners. Each student works closely with his/her teachers to develop a Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) to keep track of the standards s/he has mastered and the ones s/he is working on next. This is all done with teacher support and guidance.

**Is the multi-age classroom geared toward the Kinder/ 4th graders who are accelerated and the 1st/ 5th graders who are working below grade level?**

No. Personalized Learning provides all students an opportunity to work on the Common Core State Standards appropriate to their level at their own pace. Personalized Learning meets students wherever they are at on the learning continuum and supports their academic growth from that starting point.

**Will my 5th (or 1st) grader have to sit through a repeat of the 4th grade (or kinder) curriculum instruction?**

No. Based on assessment data, students will be placed on a learning continuum. S/he will work with the homeroom teachers to design a Personalized Learning Plan (PLP). If an upper grade student in the multi-age classroom has mastered all of the standards from the previous grade, s/he will work on their current grade's standards. If s/he has mastered most, but not all, of the previous grade standards, the bulk of his/her PLP will be geared toward the current grade standards, while also incorporating the standards from the previous grade that have not been mastered yet.

**Will my 5th grader in the multi-age classroom still be able to go on the Chicago field trip?**

Yes. While some of the multi-age field trips *may* vary from the single grade classrooms, we recognize that the 5th grade Chicago field trip is a rite of passage here at Harrison. 5th graders in the multi-age classroom will participate in this trip, as well as the 5th grade party at the end of the year.

**Will my 5th (or 1st) grader feel bad about being in a classroom with younger students?**

No. We cultivate a classroom culture where the older students in our multi-age classroom are leaders. They will also have the opportunity to partner with other students based on common interests rather solely based on their grade level.