

Community Description

The Oakridge School District is located in the center of the Cascade Mountains, 45 minutes east of the Eugene-Springfield area. The district serves the Oakridge-Westfir communities with a population of approximately 5,000. The school district is comprised of three schools - Oakridge Elementary School, Westridge Middle School and Oakridge High School. The district enrollment is approximately 750 with 250 students in grades K-4, 250 students in grades 5-8 and 250 students in grades 9-12.

While Oakridge and Westfir are located in one of the most pristine and beautiful areas of Oregon, the local economy has been in a downturn for several years. When the two lumber mills closed down, many people were forced to relocate or take on government assistance. Our district currently has approximately 65% of students on free or reduced lunch. With continued declining enrollment in our schools, economic recovery is far from certain. Until our community can bring family wage jobs home, Oakridge and Westfir will continue to decline.

School and District Description - Mission Statement

“It is the mission of the Oakridge schools to educate all students so that they may achieve their full potential as competent, productive citizens of our communities.

In the Oakridge schools, learning nurtures the mind and body of all engaged. By building an enriching environment focused on knowledge, skills and attitudes, students will emerge as competent, productive citizens. Students, district personnel, parents and members of our community will be given the opportunity to work together in academic, extra-curricular and technological activities to promote an understanding of the needs and diversity of our community, country and world. In fulfilling this challenge we are committed to - Nurturing all children...for productive global citizenship.”

Source: Oakridge School District Teacher Handbook, 2002.

To address the many different needs of our students, our district has instituted specific programs to assist academic and social achievement. A notable example is at our elementary and middle school. Every day, each student is involved in an intensive ninety minute reading block. Many students are reading below grade level and are grouped according to their reading abilities. While this may help the students while in their reading blocks, the resulting class schedule affects most other classes as well, including my own.

Class Description

Because students are reading-ability grouped throughout most of the day, they come to my class within that demographic makeup. My Technology and Media class meets twice a week and every other Friday. The students attend PE class on opposite days. The sixth grade has a total of three classes (block) and each block is determined by the student's reading ability. Yellow block consists of students reading beyond grade level. This unit, in expanded format, will be well suited for them with some modifications to make it more challenging and engaging. This class can get bored easily and has the tendency to act out. Orange Block consists of students reading below grade level. Because this unit requires a good deal of reading at a higher level than they are used to, it would be very difficult to implement this lesson in its current format. Purple Block consists of students reading at or near grade level. See chart below for detailed description. The general reading level of this class best fits the requirements of the unit without significant modification. Given this and due to the amount of time to teach this unit, I chose Purple Block. It will provide a middle-of-the-road baseline to make adjustments to meet the other blocks' diverse needs. Ideally, it would be advantageous to have a mix of students from each of the three levels that could help and learn from one another.

Student and Team Description

Teams are grouped by shades.

Name	Sex	Needs	Comments
HA	F		Shy, not a self-starter, needs to be prompted.
CG	F		The class waif. Could be a great student if she applied herself. Low self esteem and constantly wants to leave the classroom
AD	M	IEP - 504	Fairly intelligent, needs to have a fire lit under him to get started and then finishes at light speed with little thought to the task at hand
TA	M		Pretty average in academics and social settings. Sits right on top of the curve.
SC	F	TAG	Very bright, wants to do more than what is assigned. Gets frustrated at times when she can't zoom ahead of the rest of the class.
MH	F		Very low self esteem, used to live in a car several years ago, social outcast, needs positive role model in her life.
ZC	M	IEP - 504	Intelligent. His work blows me away sometimes but he can get stuck in the corners if he is not medicated.
JC	M	Behavioral	Anger issues, will apply himself very well when he is in a state of calm, gets angry with other students.
MC	M	IEP	JC's brother, a very eclectic boy, asks off-topic questions, likes attention regarding his interests that can be useful to motivate him.
MM	M		Fairly average boy. Seems to be the butt of lots of jokes from students. Seems to cope well however.
AF	F		Social butterfly of the class, intelligence grounded with common sense. Well balanced if not a tad boy crazy.
SH	F		Excellent student. Works hard and has a great balanced attitude

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Name	Sex	Needs	Comments
RG	M		Everyone likes RG. Has trouble following directions and has difficulty understanding processes and procedures. He gets focused on getting done but not necessarily on understanding.
NP	M		Like RG, has trouble following directions or processing information. Likeable.
JH	M		Classic under-achiever. Doesn't really understand the need to go to school and it shows in his work. Occasional glimpses of good work ethic.
AH	M		Quiet, average intelligence, hard worker, the kind of student I enjoy helping.
KL	F		Class chatterbox, works hard when she isn't talking but likes being the center of attention.
AM	F		Quiet, smart and deliberate. She will go places later in life because you can see her brain working.
JL	F		Sweet young girl, not overly bright but works hard to compensate. Has some trouble finishing tasks
JM	M		Nice boy, average intelligence, misses school regularly and talks ALL the time and asks irrelevant questions.
AP	F		Doesn't realize how intelligent she is. She tends to get frustrated and it throws her off. Scared to take initiative.
RS	F		VERY sweet young lady and nice personality. She has a good work ethic.