



# ***Cambria Heights Elementary School***

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Dear Cambria Heights Elementary Families:

Next year, Cambria Heights School District is implementing some changes to the structure and enhancements to the schedule at Cambria Heights Elementary School. While individual teacher and student schedules are not finalized until after the current school year ends, the following information will give you a context as to what your child's elementary experience will look like next year.

### ***What is Changing?***

Next year, each student will be assigned to a grade level homeroom teacher. Each grade level will have five regular education teachers and scheduled support services and interventions provided by learning support teachers, specialists, and paraeducators. In addition, *Cambria Heights Elementary School will have a full-time social worker on campus to directly support students and families, funded through a state mental health grant.*

### ***What Will the Schedule Look Like?***

In grades four and five, each student will have 45 minutes of specials daily (Art, Library, Computer Science, Physical Education, and Music). These courses will rotate on a five-day schedule.

Students will also have five, 49-minute academic blocks: two for math, two for Reading/English Language Arts, and one for Science. (Social Studies standards will be covered in one of the English Language Arts blocks.) This schedule allows each student increased daily Math instruction and interventions. Groupings for these blocks will be flexible: as students demonstrate mastery or the need for remediation, their schedules may change to accommodate their strengths and needs.

Finally, each student will have a 31-minute block of adaptable flex time. Over the course of a five-day rotation, students will have the following activities during this time:

- *Three consecutive days with the same content-area teacher, allowing for enrichment, remediation, interventions, progress monitoring, and extended project-based learning centered on students' interests and needs in that content area.*
- *One day of WIN (What I Need) time during which teachers can meet with students with whom they need extra time.*
- *One day of grade-wide lessons that are the same across all classrooms, including lessons related to career exploration, social-emotional learning, health and wellness, or PSSA prep.*

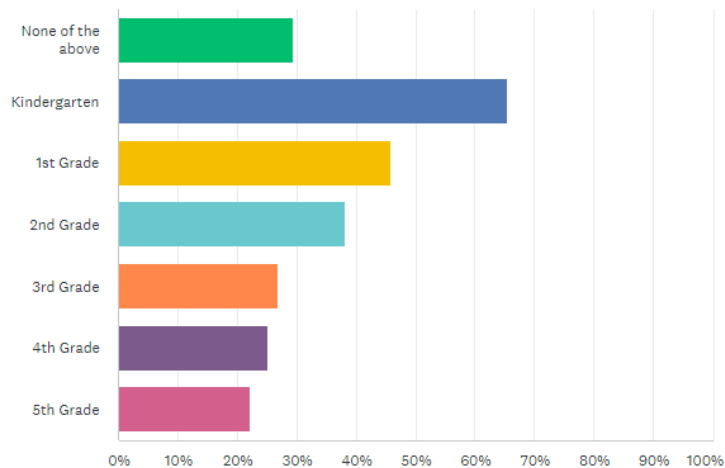
At the primary level (grades K-3), classrooms will be self-contained to foster consistency, stronger student-teacher relationships, and the flexibility for the teachers to adapt classroom schedules and instructional strategies to meet the needs of their students. As in the intermediate grades, primary schedules will allow time for enrichment, remediation, and support services for students at-risk or with special needs. Teachers will also have the flexibility to plan grade-level activities and trips.

### **Grading**

One of the questions on December’s survey of elementary preferences and perceptions asked parents and guardians about their attitudes regarding standards-based grading versus traditional grading.

Standards-based Grading should be used in the following elementary grade levels (select as many as you feel should apply):

Answered: 310 Skipped: 0



The results show that the majority of respondents believe standards-based grades should be assigned in kindergarten. By 5th grade, fewer than one in four favor standards-based grading.

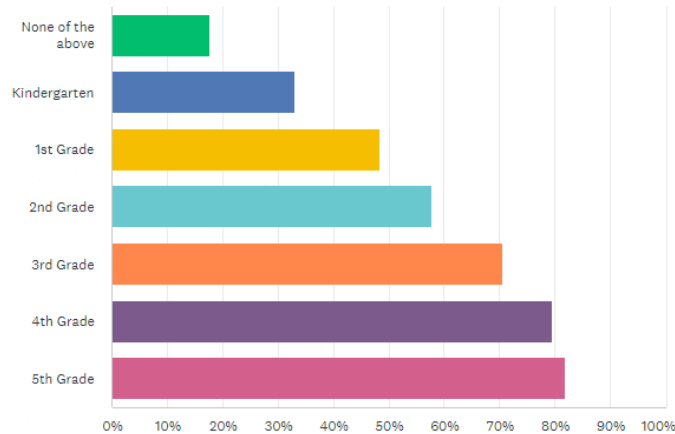
Considering this data and input from the faculty, starting next school year, Cambria Heights Elementary School will use standards-based grading in kindergarten and first grade. Report cards for students in grades 2-5 will contain traditional grades. All students’ report cards will contain benchmark data, PSSA scores, and other available data. Students will also receive standards-based grades in the five special subject areas in all grade levels.

### **Homework**

Parents also responded that homework, when meaningful and assigned with consideration to students’ and families’ commitments outside of school, is beneficial to growth and learning. More than half of survey respondents indicated that they believe homework should be assigned by 2nd grade; that number grows to 82% by 5th grade.

Homework assignments should be used in the following elementary grade levels (select as many as you feel should apply):

Answered: 299 Skipped: 11



Many respondents who added additional comments noted two benefits of homework: it helps children learn time-management skills and it is an effective means of home-school communication because parents and guardians can see from homework assignments what objectives and skills their children are covering in class. With these ideas in mind, homework will be part of the curriculum at the elementary school, with an emphasis on meaningfulness.

### ***Special Thanks***

Thank you to everyone who responded to our survey this winter. The 310 responses helped lead a discussion among the members of the administration and curriculum committee.

As always, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the elementary school at (814) 344-8506 or the district office at (814) 674-3626.