

## **Departmentalization of Teaching Policy**

A major reason why parents started Loveland Classical Schools was because they wanted a school that focused on the quality of the subject matter content their students would be receiving. As a charter school and school of innovation, LCS' elementary, middle, and high schools were organized around this desire of high quality content. And how better to provide quality instruction in a subject than to have a subject matter expert teach that class? This occurs in traditional middle and high schools but not in elementary schools. At Loveland Classical Schools, we believe that this level of expertise should be brought into our elementary school.

Beginning in the first grade, content level experts teach his/her subject: scientists teach science, mathematicians teach mathematics, historians teach history, artists teach art, and so on. Because of this, each teacher teaches his/her specialty and brings their passion and expertise into the classroom, providing a high level of content not commonly taught in the traditional elementary school model. Students pick up on the teacher's enthusiasm and love for the subject matter and become more engaged with the content as a result. Further, students receive the core subject matter classes every single day, allowing for the class to engage deeper into the content than they would otherwise.

Typically in elementary classrooms across the country, elementary school teachers teach math, science, reading, writing, and history. However, these teachers have subject areas which they enjoy more, are more knowledgeable, and are more passionate. It is common for traditional elementary teachers to teach their best subjects well and "get through" the other subjects they are not as familiar. An LCS teacher was even relayed a story from parents and students in which their family once had a teacher who stopped teaching science altogether mid-year because she did not like science. Further, there can be instances where an elementary student does not enjoy his/her classroom teacher. In the typical model, that student would be in that one teacher's class throughout the day for the entire school year. With departmentalization, teachers rotate through the classroom providing fresh restarts throughout the day, allowing both the student and teacher to focus on the content.

In a traditional elementary school setting, if a student is struggling, the parents have few options. With departmentalization at Loveland Classical Schools, teachers are required to meet together every day after school. This time is set aside specifically for educational and academic improvement through grade-level discussions, departmental discussions on curriculum, parent communication, or sessions on effective teaching. Several days a month are set aside specifically to discuss struggling students and how to best help them.

A crucial component of the departmentalization model is the Classroom Coordinator (CC). In

each classroom in grades K-5, a CC remains with the class of students for the entire day as the teachers rotate through the classrooms. The CCs are the constant presence in the room, establish the relationship most familiar to younger students, and are a central contact point for parent communication. Also, the CC handles the transitions between classes so students are ready to begin class and class time is used most efficiently.

The CCs are also another resource for the classroom so the teacher can better focus on instruction. For example, if a student scratches his/her knee, the CC can make sure that the student makes it to the health office. Or, if a student has a doctor's appointment at 10:00, the CC ensures that the student is at the front office to meet his/her parents for the appointment. In situations like these, the teacher is able to focus on teaching and the lesson. By assisting with the non-academic circumstances that arise in the day, the CC can save up to five minutes in a 45-minute class every day. This can add up to approximately 14 hours of instruction or 19 extra classes for the school year.

Departmentalization in the elementary school is unique to Loveland Classical Schools. It provides content matter expertise and excitement to students in the first through fifth grades with the support of a classroom coordinator who assists with the academic process. Students receive instruction from multiple teachers keeping the day "fresh," allowing for the class to better focus on the subject matter. All subjects are given equal due and are taught every day allowing for deeper student engagement with the material. This is an innovation unique to Loveland Classical Schools, and we invite you to join us in the benefits that departmentalization provides.

LCS Policy Adopted: July 18, 2011

Amended: August 9, 2012

Revised: December 15, 2016