

WESTBROOK BOARD OF EDUCATION  
EDUCATE, CHALLENGE, & INSPIRE

WESTBROOK BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Thursday, January 12, 2023 @ 6:00 p.m.  
WHS Library  
Special Board of Education Meeting

The Special Meeting of the Westbrook Board of Education will be held on Thursday, January 12, 2023 @ 6:00 p.m. in the WHS Library.

Members of the public who would like to view this meeting remotely, please access the link here:

Method 1

1. Visit <https://www.westbrookctschools.org/groups/5650>
2. Click the link provided at the time of the meeting.

Method 2

1. Navigate to <https://www.westbrookctschools.org>
2. Click “Departments”
3. Click “Westbrook Board of Education”
4. Click the link provided at the time of the meeting.

AGENDA

- I. CALL TO ORDER – 6:00 P.M.
- II. PUBLIC COMMENT Re: Matters of General Concern & Agenda Items

Board welcomes public participation and asks that speakers **sign in** to be recognized and limit their comments to a reasonable amount of time (3 minutes). Speakers may offer objective comments about specific agenda items or school operations and programs that concern them. To protect the impartiality of the Board, we will not permit any negative or positive comments about the Board of Education, specific personnel and students. Such comments should be brought to school administration. The Board will not respond to comments made during public comment. When appropriate, district administration will follow-up at a later point in time.

- III. GRADE 5 PROPOSAL – VOTE ANTICIPATED
- IV. ADJOURN .

Good afternoon, Westbrook Schools Community,

As a reminder, there will be a Special Westbrook Board of Education meeting on Thursday, January 12, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. to discuss and possibly vote on the proposal to add Grade 5 to Daisy Ingraham Elementary School for the 2023-2024 school year or the 2024-2025 school year.

This meeting will take place in the Westbrook High School Library Media Center. The agenda is attached to this communication. There will be an opportunity for public comment.

Please find below the most updated FAQ document related to the Grade 5 proposal with additional questions and responses included.

Sincerely,  
Kristina J. Martineau, Ed.D.  
Westbrook Superintendent of Schools

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)  
Follow Up Questions and Responses: Daisy Ingraham Elementary School Grade 5 Proposal**

**Updated: January 9, 2023**

**If we make this move, when will it happen? When will a decision be made?**

The Westbrook Board of Education will meet to discuss the proposal on Thursday, January 12, 2023 to decide whether to keep the current configuration; add grade 5 for the 2023-2024 school year; or add grade 5 for the 2024-2025 school year. This meeting will be held in the high school library.

**How will this proposed change impact the budget? What is the overall cost or savings?**

There are no direct savings to the budget as a result of the proposed addition of grade 5 to the elementary school. Potential budget savings are directly related to enrollment trends and overstaffing for current enrollment levels at the middle school and high school. These decisions have not yet been made and will be discussed throughout the budget development process this year and over the next two budget cycles.

When enrollment levels changed at Daisy Ingraham Elementary School over the last 8-10 years, a preschool program was added and staffing levels were adjusted for declining enrollment levels. No staffing reductions are anticipated at Daisy Ingraham because those staffing reductions were already made over time. Enrollment levels began to decline at the middle school in the 2013-2014 school year and have continued until this year. Projections for the next 10 years show a relatively stable enrollment for the middle school (starting this year) and high school (lowest level anticipated for 2025-2026 school year).

Potential budget savings are the direct result of enrollment trends and overstaffing at the secondary level and not a result of the proposed grade 5 addition to Daisy Ingraham Elementary School.

Historical Enrollment in Grade Combinations									
Year	K-4	PK-4	PK-K	K-8	5-8	PK-8	5-12	7-12	9-12
2012-13	281	310	73	557	276	586	562	443	286
2013-14	269	294	72	532	263	557	546	433	283
2014-15	245	272	72	482	237	509	535	416	298
2015-16	227	262	73	454	227	489	521	398	294
2016-17	235	271	92	463	228	499	502	387	274
2017-18	213	237	51	449	236	473	486	380	250
2018-19	211	248	83	422	211	459	443	344	232
2019-20	208	255	88	393	185	440	406	319	221
2020-21	223	271	97	391	168	439	373	296	205
2021-22	201	245	86	373	172	417	384	297	212
2022-23	215	254	89	374	159	413	358	278	199

**Is there enough space at Daisy Ingraham Elementary School for Grade 5, including space for support staff? Without sharing maps is there another way to describe layout changes and room reassignments?**

There is enough classroom space to comfortably accommodate classrooms for grades PreK-5. We are currently drafting room assignments to determine space for support staff. Support staff are currently assigned to full size classrooms- we will evaluate the feasibility for some shared spacing in these larger rooms. Final room assignments for 2023-2024 will be determined in the spring and with staff input.

Main hallway rooms

There is individual space available for two SLP service providers, a social worker and a school psychologist (all separate spaces for each provider and large enough to accommodate individual and small groups of 2-3 students for support services).

Computer lab space near the library- we are currently evaluating the need for a separate lab space. Students now all have individual devices and we no longer need a dedicated lab space as we did years ago. Lessons could occur in grade level classrooms, in the library, and in the STREAM Innovation Station at The Pit. This lab space could be repurposed into a reading intervention and enrichment space or a dedicated space for our multi-language learners to receive support. We are also in the early stages of designing a reading “nook” area in the large space in front of the library to expand independent reading spaces (possibly low loft-like spaces, book cases, big cushions, reading chairs, etc.)

We also have two large rooms at the end of the hallway. One is currently used as a multipurpose general music space and the other is currently being used as a conference space (former band room). We would like to offer band as a choice for grade 4 and 5. If the band needs a separate space (TBD), we will return the conference space back to a band room. If a separate space is not needed, we will use this space for instructional purposes (conference room to be moved back to the main office and central office staff moved back to WHS/WMS campus)

#### Primary Wing Area Grades PreK-2

There are 16 classrooms in this wing to accommodate PreK-2 (3 sections x 4 grade levels= 12 classrooms) with additional space to accommodate special education resource and skills rooms, and reading and math specialists for PreK-2.

#### Upper Wing Grades 3-5

There are 12 regular sized classrooms and one additional double-sized classroom. For grades 3-5, we need 8 classrooms. The double classroom will be converted into a STEM lab space for grades 4 and 5 (if scheduling permits, for grade 3 as well) specifically. There are enough full size classroom spaces in this hallway for TESOL/Bilingual support, Spanish, Special Education Resource, and the Grade 3-5 Reading Specialist. We will use part of the double STEM classroom for math intervention and enrichment.

**How will this change impact the flexibility for staffing that has been necessary at Daisy when variation in grade level size has meant some teachers need to shift from 4th to 2nd for the next year, etc.?**

Connecticut teacher certifications for elementary schools are generally K-6, K-8, 1-6, PreK-3, Integrated Early Childhood/Special Education PreK-3, and Special Education K-12.

Staff reassigned to Daisy Ingraham Elementary School will hold Connecticut certification in one or more of the above certifications or hold a special certification like #047 Technology Education, which covers PreK-12 (robotics).

We will still have flexibility to reassign teachers across grades at the elementary school with the addition of grade 5 staffing in terms of certification. Ideally, however, teacher assignment changes year to year would at least remain within a grade level band (Gr 3-5 for example) based on experience, interest of the staff member, and content area of preference (math, reading, social studies, science, etc. as a special focus).

**Will band and/or instrumental music be offered again at Daisy Ingraham Elementary School?**

Yes. We are excited about the possibility of adding instrumental music back at Daisy and hope to have performances in both chorus and band in the future to showcase our students' talents and learning in music. This will strengthen our music program in the years ahead in middle school and high school. If grade 5 is added to Daisy Ingraham Elementary School, there is space and staffing to offer band as a choice to students in grades 4 and 5. We are closely evaluating the schedule to ensure that enough instructional and/or general music time is allotted each week to support a strong music program. While we are very excited to expand learning opportunities in

science, robotics, coding, and math, we are equally excited to expand and strengthen our offerings in other areas like music and art.

**Will the start and end times of the elementary school be evaluated (i.e time allotted for morning and afternoon transition, unpacking, packing up, etc. vs. additional instructional time)?**

As we review the schedules for each grade level at Daisy Ingraham, we also evaluate the time needed for arrival and dismissal preparation and procedures grade by grade.

**Is there any discussion or consideration for using available space at either the elementary school or the middle school for expanding the early childhood program?**

Any decision regarding the use of open space in the future has not yet been made and will, in the future, involve a committee to evaluate options and to make recommendations. There will be opportunity for input.

**Will class size remain small?**

At this time (enrollment projection and January 2023 snapshot), 100% of grade level classes are expected to run under 20 students PreK-8. We will maintain appropriately small class sizes to support student learning and comprehensive course offerings for the students of Westbrook. We are committed to offering reasonable small class sizes that are developmentally appropriate and allow a wide variety of educational experiences and opportunities for our students PreK-12.

Anticipated class sizes for 2023-2024 at Daisy Ingraham Elementary School and Westbrook Middle School (includes staff reductions at WMS that will be discussed during the budget development process):

	Anticipated Enrollment 2023-2024	Average Class Size
Preschool	39 (3 sections)	13
K	37 (3 sections)	12-13
1	49 (3 sections)	16-17
2	40 (3 sections)	13-14
3	43 (3 sections)	14-15
4	36 (2 sections)	18

5	45 (3 sections)	15
6	30 (2 sections)	15
7	50 (3 sections)	16-17
8	37 (2 sections)	18-19

**Do we have recess options and playground equipment that are appropriate for Grade 5?**

Each of our three major playscapes (other than preschool) are designed for ages 5-12 years old, so these playscapes would be appropriate for fifth graders. We would schedule a playground rotation so that all grade levels can access playscapes, blacktop areas and soccer/baseball fields equitably. We do have a separate playscape, in a separate fenced-in area, for our preschoolers.

**Is it possible to add lockers for students in grade 5 at Daisy?**

The cost to add lockers to the upper elementary wing for grades 4 and 5 is approximately \$15,000-\$17,000. The space at the end of the upper wing hallway would also need to be evaluated by the fire marshal and an electrician to determine feasibility and safety to add lockers. It is still yet to be determined if lockers are necessary.

**How will this proposed change impact enrichment offerings at Westbrook Middle School?**

It will not impact enrichment offerings. We are committed to all of our programs, activities, and offerings at Westbrook Middle School and we will continue to offer a wide range of opportunities for students based on interest and need.

**Is it possible to make this change for 2023-2024 in such a short period of time?**

Yes. If the Westbrook Board of Education makes the decision to move forward with having grade 5 remain at Daisy Ingraham Elementary School for 2023-2024 in a PreK-5 model, our staff will be involved in planning this spring, including identifying needs to make this a successful and positive change for our students and school community. There is enough time left in the school year and summer months to make this change happen for 2023-2024.

**What shared staffing with WHS in other content areas and support based on student need/enrollment/staffing will occur and why is this not being answered now?**

These decisions have not yet been made, but all elective, exploratory, and unified areas will be considered and evaluated in the same way that we review grade level classroom staffing numbers based on enrollment. We are committed to maintaining and supporting all of these areas (music, art, language, technology education, computer science, physical education, health, etc.) so that our students have opportunities to explore and follow their interests. No program cuts are planned, but staffing will be reviewed to ensure we are appropriately and reasonably staffed to support all of our programs and course offerings now and in the future.

**What are the district's long-term goals for these schools? Are they planning to combine them and cut classes and employees due to impending lower enrollment numbers?**

We are committed to maintaining three schools in Westbrook- Daisy Ingraham Elementary School, Westbrook Middle School, and Westbrook High School. There are a lot of rumors circulating regarding a restructuring that would close a school. This has not been discussed and there are no plans to close any of schools. Shared staffing between the middle and high school is not a new concept or practice in Westbrook. We have returned to enrollment levels of grades between 35-42. In order to support and maintain high quality programs and offerings, we will transition to shared staffing between WMS and WHS in specialized elective and exploratory areas in response to enrollment trends, but in a way that continues to maintain comprehensive elective course offerings in art, music, language, technology education, physical education, health, family and consumer science, business, etc. There are no plans for program cuts. There are no plans to consolidate school buildings.

**Will this new schedule affect flexibility for teachers at Daisy?**

No. Teachers will still have flexibility to meet student needs and determine use of larger instructional blocks of time (breaking into activities and mini-lessons). The schedule is still a conceptual draft of possible changes– the larger blocks for reading and math could easily be reconfigured into two blocks. The final schedule will be developed for 2023-2024 with input from staff.

**Will spaces at Daisy be adequate for future needs?**

Yes, there is enough space at Daisy to accommodate anticipated future needs. If there is a significant change in enrollment trends, there will be enough advance notice to make changes if needed. The current enrollment trends for the next ten years indicate that there is enough space at Daisy Ingraham Elementary School to accommodate grade 5.

**Will moving 5th grade to Daisy have a positive impact on staffing?**

The addition of grade 5 allows us to schedule an additional staff member at Daisy Ingraham to support science instruction. Teachers at Daisy Ingraham Elementary School who have experience teaching in the upper grades have expressed interest in teaching one or two subjects typical of an upper elementary style instead of teaching all subjects. This will allow for greater specialized training and professional development in the content areas teachers are most interested in teaching and enjoy the most. This will strengthen teaching and increase learning in reading, math, science, social studies and writing as well as provide an opportunity to redesign the rotational blocks to add more time STEM areas and to support programs in more traditional unified arts/specials areas. This is an excellent and timely opportunity to rethink the instructional model for grades 3-5 that will have a positive impact on both staff and students.

**If we make this move, when will it happen?**

The Westbrook Board of Education will meet to discuss the proposal on Thursday, January 12, 2023, to decide whether to keep the current configuration; add grade 5 for the 2023-2024 school year; or add grade 5 for the 2024-2025 school year.

### **What are surrounding districts doing?**

Chester Elementary School: K-6 configuration, John Winthrop Middle School Grades 7 and 8 (regional middle school for Chester, Deep River, and Essex)

Clinton: Joel Elementary School PreK-4 configuration; Eliot Middle School Grades 5-8

Deep River Elementary School: K-6 configuration (regional middle school for Chester, Deep River, and Essex)

Essex Elementary School: K-6 configuration with a regional preschool program with limited seats for Chester, Deep River and Essex (program houses at Essex Elementary School) (regional middle school for Chester, Deep River, and Essex)

Guilford: all elementary schools are K-4 (one houses preschool and specialized special education programs); Baldwin Middle School is Grades 5 and 6; Adams Middle School is Grades 7 and 8.

### Lyme-Old Lyme/Region 18

- Center School: Preschool only
- Mile Creek: K-5
- Lyme Consolidated School: K-5

### Madison:

Town Campus Learning Center: Preschool

Jeffrey and Ryerson Elementary Schools: K-3

Brown Intermediate School: Grades 4 and 5

Polson Middle School: Grades 6-8

Old Saybrook: Goodwin Elementary School PreK-4; Old Saybrook Middle School Grades 5-8

### **What are the most recent results of school climate surveys?**

The survey information that was referenced at the meeting is from survey data from the 2016-2017 school year through the National School Climate Center. The survey was administered in 2017-2018 and 2018-2019, but has not been re-administered since then so there is no new data from that specific survey instrument to post. We are in contact with the organization who conducted these surveys and will evaluate whether or not to re-administer that specific climate survey instrument moving forward.

During the 2020-2021 school year, a PreK-12 Social, Emotional and Wellness Committee was established with teacher leaders from each school to lead our work in SEL to support student and staff wellness. A district-wide SEL survey was administered to help us to identify SEL priorities. We are also in the early stages of a pilot with the CT State Department of Education (via Aperture) to improve social and emotional teaching to meet student needs.

In the spring, we will follow up with a school climate survey as an additional data collection and source of important information regarding school climate and student needs moving forward. Those results will be shared in the spring at a Westbrook Board of Education meeting. A



summary of those results and recommendations will be published on our district website. We will evaluate what other area schools use for survey instruments to evaluate school climate.

**How will this move benefit students and staff?**

There will be opportunities for staff in Grades 3-5 to specialize in teaching one or two subject areas (for example, reading and writing or science or math). This was a request directly from staff who asked leadership to consider an elementary appropriate department model so that teachers would have the opportunity to teach subject areas they most enjoy and to grow as learners themselves more deeply when focusing on best instructional practices in one or more subjects instead of trying to balance all subjects, especially as the content becomes more complex in the upper elementary grades. Students will benefit from experiencing an elementary appropriate departmental model that begins to transition both academic and social skills from primary to middle school age. Students in grade 5 will specifically benefit from participating in unified arts and special areas in an academic environment that is appropriate for their age and development as classes at the middle school begin to transition more and more to shared staffing with the high school. A grade 4 and 5 shared model team is a more developmentally appropriate model than a grade 5 and 6 shared model team. Grade 4 will benefit from courses and experiences that grade 5 has had access to in the middle school model. For example, students will benefit from a transitional music program model that includes the reintroduction of band and chorus at Daisy Ingraham Elementary School. Grades 3-5 students will benefit from the addition of a science lab and science instructional model that will prepare them well for the transition to middle school and the increased expectations of Connecticut Next Generation Science Standards.

**Will enrichment activities exist if there are fewer students interested at the middle school level? Will students still have access to the same activities and resources?**

Enrichment activities will be offered based on student interest. We anticipate offering a wide variety of engaging activities at all three schools for the 2023-2024 school year. We are in the process now of reviewing new offerings for all three schools based on requests made by students, staff, leadership, and parents. We are also looking at reintroducing band as a choice to all students in grades 4 and 5 at Daisy.

**Is testing data available?**

Yes, testing data was released publicly by the Connecticut Department of Education on December 9, 2022. We have added a link to our website ([click on icon for CT Next Generation Accountability](#)) to allow easier access for our school community to review the data. Next month, we will provide a summary overview of data that was released and add that information to the curriculum, teaching and learning section of the district website.

**How will this move impact spaces used for support services?**

There will be appropriate space provided for support services at Daisy Ingraham Elementary School. There is enough space for both learning needs and meetings in the primary wing (PreK-2) and the proposed upper elementary wing (3-5).

**Will this make it harder for support services (OT, PT, Speech, counseling, etc.) to meet with students without pulling them out of core instruction?**

We are in the process of revising the schedule for Daisy Ingraham Elementary School to meet student needs for support services and to minimize disruption or missed time in other areas. Support staff will have an opportunity with teachers in the spring to provide input on the draft schedules before they are finalized for the 2023-2024 school year.

**Can writing and spelling be a part of the reading block proposed for the Daisy schedule for grades 3-4?**

Yes, writing will be incorporated into both time for reading as well as it relates to non-fiction and social studies blocks of instructional time. Writing skills are important to develop for our students across many content areas. In collaboration with the principal and grade-level teachers, we will evaluate the need for spelling explicit instruction based on the latest educational research and best practices.

**What is the vision of the PoG block?**

This time would be a dedicated learning space for students to explore the five academic priorities we identified as a school community through the Westbrook Portrait of a Graduate. Projects and activities will provide students to explore and grow as creative thinkers, critical problem-solvers, effective communicators, and responsible decision makers who are socially aware and perseverant learners. Each school has developed draft rubrics to measure each of these skills. This instructional block is a dedicated space to explicitly teach those skills, to make connections to learning in other subjects, and to develop activities and projects that provide students with opportunities to apply those skills in a personalized “discovery” model. Our teachers will have an opportunity to collaborate and create what this block will look like at Daisy to best support student growth and learning experiences as it relates to the skills identified in our shared vision of educational priorities. This will be an engaging, personalized learning experience for our students and staff. The work from this block will help to build individual student portfolios similar to what students will create at the middle school and then in high school to demonstrate their growth in these important areas.

**Is there a plan to consolidate the support staff at the middle and high school or to add additional support staff at Daisy Ingraham Elementary School?**

At this time, we plan to add additional interventionist/enrichment specialists in reading and math to support student learning in these areas. We are looking closely at student need to determine whether or not Daisy Ingraham will need additional support for social work, school counseling and special education. Each year, we closely evaluate student need and staffing levels for support services to determine where staffing is most needed and if additional staffing support is needed. Yes, it is possible that staffing from the middle and high school will be consolidated based on need as well as enrollment and staffing would be added to Daisy to support student needs.

**Will we need another bus for Daisy Ingraham Elementary School?**

Based on current runs (neighborhoods/routes), we do not anticipate needing an additional bus with the grade 5 at Daisy Ingraham Elementary School. However, this is a question that we

consider each year and is dependent on new students and the configuration of routes (additional neighborhoods, for example, if there are new kindergarten students on routes not previously covered).

**How does Daisy staff feel about the block schedule and teaching only one subject?**

The “block” schedule is a concept draft schedule. Teachers at Daisy will have opportunities throughout the winter and spring to provide input on the schedule and what those assignments and blocks might look like for the 2023-2024 school year. There is also flexibility in the block approach— instruction would not run for a straight 80-90 minutes. The class would have multiple objectives related to reading or math or science as well as time for breaks and different activities. Overall, the intent of the block schedule communicated in the draft schedules for the Grade 5 proposal meeting was to share that there would be dedicated time for social studies and science on a regular basis to ensure those important subjects are built into the day to day schedule. The concept schedules also communicated that more instructional time would be added (does not necessarily need to be in a 85-90 minute chunk) each day in reading and math to address the learning and program needs in those critical foundational subjects. The final schedule may break the math time into two segments (60 minutes and 25-30 minutes, for example). Teachers at Daisy have expressed interest and have many questions about what the schedule will look like, but not only will they be a part of that schedule development process, but many have expressed excitement about the possibility of focusing on teaching one or two subjects they feel most confidence and joy in teaching, which is a huge win for student learning. It’s also a tremendous benefit for teachers who can then focus on their own professional learning and growth in areas they love to teach. Many of the ideas shared about the team model, instructional time, STREAM rotation, dedicated time for science and social studies, and specializing in one or two subjects are ideas that came directly from our teachers at Daisy Ingraham Elementary School.

**What classrooms will students take up at Daisy and will our special education teachers and program be displaced?**

Students in grades 3-5 will be in one wing. Students in PreK-2 will be in the primary wing. Grade 2 will move from that “upper” wing to the primary wing next year. There will be dedicated space in each wing for support staff, interventionists, and special education staff. There is enough space to accommodate grade 5 comfortably even with the addition of a science lab.

**How will this change impact current employed special education teachers at the elementary level?**

Each year, we evaluate staffing levels in special education to ensure we have enough staff to support student needs and individualized student programs in all three schools. It is likely there will be additional staff assigned to Daisy to support students in grade 5. We are also looking closely at the support level in our three preschool classrooms to ensure we have the most effective and supportive model for that program as well.

**What courses that are currently offered to 5th graders will not be offered to next year’s 5th graders regardless of whether they are at Daisy or the Middle School?**

We are currently evaluating whether we have enough staffing to offer French in grade 5 and 6 as a required rotation in world languages or if it should be offered as a choice. The decision will be made after course requests are processed Spring 2023.

**What decrease in time spent on World Languages, Music/Band, Social Studies, Band and PE will occur in the proposed restructuring and schedules? IE, Spanish and Social Studies every other day instead of the current everyday, Band 1x per week instead of every other day.**

The sample schedules shared as part of the Grade 5 Proposal presentation are not final schedules. Instructional time in each of the areas above will be finalized Spring 2023 for the 2023-2024 school year. Intervention and enrichment in reading and math will be embedded in the additional time allotted in the longer instructional periods and as needed in a dedicated block. The middle school principal will work closely with staff and evaluate suggestions to develop an appropriate schedule to meet students' needs and interests for the 2023-2024 school year.

**How will the focus on Math and ELA impact our students' ability to engage in Social Studies, Unified Arts, Health, PE and World Language?**

It will not diminish the quality of other content area programs and offerings. We will ensure, in collaboration with staff, that enough instructional time is scheduled to support student learning in each of these areas and to meet Connecticut content area standards in each subject.