

**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**

MINUTES

Members Present: Kim Walker, Zack Hayden, Christine Kuehlewind, Michelle Palumbo, Mary Ella Luft, Sally Greaves, Don Perreault, Andrew Miesse

Absent: Mike Esposito

Also Present: Superintendent Kristina J. Martineau; Administrators: Ruth Rose, Tara Winch, Matthew Talmadge, Fran Lagace; IT Director, Ben Russell

I. CALL TO ORDER – The Special meeting of January 12, 2023 was called to order at 6:05 p.m. in the WHS library by Kim Walker, Chair.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Angela Colby, parent, stated her concerns on the Board’s decision to move 5th grade to Daisy, touching on topics including curriculum and her beliefs that educational concessions are in question, social emotional piece not being met, loss of teachers, vacancy of the current middle school and questioned whether there was teacher participation in the decision.

Colleen Bloom, parent, expressed her concern that Social Studies is not taught everyday and wants more science offerings. She also asked that a virtual option for board meetings continue to be provided or meetings be recorded and a microphone provided.

Bonnie Palermo, resident, commented that change is hard but encouraged the Board not to rush change and to not forget about taxpayers. She also suggested revisiting regionalization.

Shantel Burke, parent, commented that moving the 5th grade to Daisy is only a band aid and not a long term solution.

Jessie Lemmark encouraged the Board to vote “No” to move 5th grade to Daisy. She commented that a focus should be on hiring a Spanish teacher and to make improvements at the high school. If it is a “yes” vote, she asked the Board not to rush it and to take time to reconfigure curriculum and to make sure transition is done correctly.

III. GRADE 5 PROPOSAL

Discussion included benefits and disadvantages of adding grade 5 to Daisy Ingraham Elementary School. Topics discussed: timing of change, class sizes, music programming, science instruction, staffing and adequate time for teacher to learn curriculum, extra-curricular activities,

best model for 5th graders; use of current middle school; and adequate support for teachers and students.

MOTION by D. Perreault to move the 5th grade to Daisy and SECOND by C. Kuehlewind.

Vote: Ayes: Z. Hayden, M. Luft, C. Kuehlewind, A. Miesse, D. Perreault, M. Palumbo, K. Walker

Nay: S. Greaves

MOTION by C. Kuehlewind and SECOND by A. Miesse to move Grade 5 to Daisy for the 2023-24 school year.

Amend Motion by S. Greaves to modify the previous motion to move Grade 5 to Daisy for the 2024-2025 school year and SECOND by M. Luft.

Vote: MOTION by S. Greaves and SECOND by M. Luft to move Grade 5 to Daisy for the 2024-25 school year (Ayes): S. Greaves, M. Palumbo, M. Luft, D. Perreault, Z. Hayden, K. Walker (Nays): Z. Miesse, C. Kuehlewind MOTION carries.

IV. ADJOURN: MOTION by D. Perreault and SECOND by M. Luft to adjourn at 8:33 p.m. Vote unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Kuehlewind, Board Secretary

Cecilia S. Lester, Board Recording Clerk