WESTBROOK BOARD OF EDUCATION

**Tuesday, December 6, 2022**

**Special Board of Education Meeting 6:00 p.m.**

**WMS Cafeteria**

## MINUTES

Members Present: Kim Walker, Don Perreault, Christine Kuehlewind, Zachary Hayden,

Mary Ella Luft, Michelle Palumbo, Andrew Miesse

Absent: Sally Greaves, Mike Esposito

Also Present: Superintendent Kristina J. Martineau; Administrators, Ruth Rose, Matt Talmadge; Ben Russell, Technology

1. CALL TO ORDER – The Special Meeting of December 6, 2022 was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by K. Walker, Chair.
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. GRADE 5 PROPOSAL – Superintendent Kristina Martineau presented to the Board on

the possibility of moving the 5th grade to the Daisy Ingraham School campus. A handout was provided and slides were presented to inform the public of the aspects of moving the fifth grade. Superintendent Martineau stated that there have been conversations over a period of time on this topic but no decisions have been made at this time. The slides showed proposals for grade level configurations, projected enrollment figures, possible clubs, activities and sports, proposed changes at the middle school level and survey results from staff and parents on the proposal. Superintendent Martineau reviewed the results of the survey with 169 responses and she responded to specific questions from the participants. The proposal can be accessed at [www.westbrookctschools.org](http://www.westbrookctschools.org). K. Walker, Chair, offered each board member an opportunity to speak. Z. Hayden commented on desire to improve reading and math scores and the need to have the appropriate amount of time for instruction – will move of grade 5 address enrollment issues, etc. M. Luft appreciated community input and needs more time to think about it. C. Kuehlewind appreciated feedback and has thoughts about the developmental piece and would like more detail about space availability at Daisy. D. Perreault would like to see class averages and will the move have a positive effect on staff, and is it better to put it off for a year? M. Palumbo has a concern about block scheduling and what is best for the kids and need to start bridge for fifth grade independence. A. Miesse commented that he has learned a lot from the presentation. He feels it is a priority to bring STEM to 4th and 5th graders and should start sooner than later.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT:

1. Colleen Bloom, parent, has 4 children in the Westbrook Schools. She commented

she would like to have had survey results prior to the meeting. She did not believe it is

beneficial for students to spend 8 years at the same school. Her child has benefited in his

move to the middle school. She encourages the Board to spend a day in a classroom.

2. Travis Bloom, student, likes the freedom given to fifth graders; changing classes and

was prepared to move to the middle school. He also likes being part of morning

announcements and clubs and activities at the middle school.

3. Caden Bloom, 3rd grader, stated he has worked hard to get to middle school and is

looking forward to the move. He likes the idea of more freedom, having his own locker,

etc.

4. Carrie Bloom, student , likes more freedom and her own locker and being treated

as more mature.

5. Julie Dwyer appreciated the presentation and talked about 4th graders being socially

and emotionally young. She referred to the book “Yardsticks” as a reference on child

development. Her thoughts were to give 5th graders an opportunity to be leaders at Daisy.

7. Sean Freer commented he is in favor if properly done and if it is in the best interest of

staff and students. His thoughts are that “kids will roll with the punches” but wants to be

sure change is for the better.

8. Cassandra Morrison, parent opposes the move. Her daughter has blossomed at the

middle school – not enough opportunities for fifth graders at Daisy – there should not be

“traveling teachers” and after school activities as they are now at middle school are

heavily attended.

9. Charlotte Morrison, student , is not in favor of the move. She likes the library at

the middle school and after school activities. She suggests 4th and 5th graders should be

asked their opinions.

10.Isla Orsini, student is not in favor of the move – she likes the clubs and activities and

morning announcements, band and chorus and benefits of more freedom.

11. Shannon Brooke, Speech Pathologist, concerned about her workspace.

12. Corey Ehrlich, School Social worker, shared her perspective on the social, emotional

aspect.

13. Jen Gallegos stated she discussed this with her 10th grader who liked being at Daisy as a fifth grader- there were more activities then and she believes some of those activities

could return.

14. Ryan Dochin, parent, said education is fundamentally the most important and if

research shows fifth grade should be at Daisy then get them there as soon as possible.

15. Leslie Fuchs, parent, asked about student test scores. She also had concerns about

activities and recess time and believes 90 minutes of class time is too long.

MOTION by Z. Hayden and SECOND by M. Luft to adjourn at 8:05 p.m. for a tour of the middle school. Vote unanimous.

V. EXECUTIVE SESSION – Collective Bargaining Strategy

A. Discussion on Retirement Incentives for Eligible Retirees

MOTION by C. Kuehlewind and SECOND by M. Palumbo to move to Regular Session

at 8:31 p.m.

VI. REGULAR SESSION

A. Retirement Incentives – MOTION by M. Luft and SECOND by Z. Hayden to

approve that Superintendent Martineau to move forward with the plan to offer retirement

incentives to the WEA. Vote unanimous.

VII. ADJOURN: MOTION by Z. Hayden and SECOND by M. Luft to adjourn at 8:55 p.m.

Vote unanimous.