

Q: Has the schedule been worked out for grade 6 at the elementary schools? Will they have the same encore classes?

A: Yes, the scheduling design team’s work was shared with the Teaching and Learning Committee of the BoE last week, and the schedule planned for grade 6 provides the same core and encore classes in a format aligned to the middle school model. With less passing time needed for movement between classes, the “saved” minutes provide a time for grade 6 students to touch base at the end of the day as well with their homeroom teachers, versus going directly to buses from the last class at BMS.

The schedule for one elementary school:

GRADE 6A Daily Schedule - Working Draft												
Times	8:30-8:39	8:40-9:22	9:23-10:03	10:05-10:47	10:48-11:30	11:31-12:13	12:15-12:56	12:58-1:40	1:42-2:22	2:24-3:04	3:06-3:15	
M	HR	ELA	PE	Math	Social Studies	Social Studies	Lunch 30	F	Science	WL	ART	HR
T	HR	Science	STEM	ELA	Math	Math	Lunch 30	L	Social Studies	WL	MUSIC	HR
W	HR	Social Studies	HEALTH	Science	ELA	ELA	Lunch 30	E	Math	WL	PE	HR
TH	HR	Math	THEATER	Social Studies	Science	Science	Lunch 30	X	ELA	WL	MUSIC	HR
FR	HR	ELA	PE	Math	Social Studies	Flex	Lunch 30		Science	WL	ART	HR

Q: How would the inclusion of grade 6 in the elementary schools impact the schedules of K-5 students?

The scheduling design teams have reviewed this scenario, and with the exception of a handful of art classes in each school, offering the same encore classes work well. Tom Scavone, Director of Music and Visual Arts, is currently working with our art teachers to refine the schedule to reduce space conflicts or to create some additional spaces suitable for art instruction where these few situations exist. Elementary students spend the majority of their time with their classroom teachers, and this would remain exactly the same.

Q: The current proposal for administrative staffing at the elementary levels has LLS with a slightly higher ratio of student to administrators. What would it look like if the District added another .5 FTE assistant principal?

A: The current proposed staffing is well within acceptable limits to appropriately serve the needs of LLS with grade 6 included, but an additional .5 FTE assistant principal would provide other resources and bring the ratio of LLS closer to the other elementary schools. The District has also proposed a new 1.0 FTE administrator position for SPED for the elementary level, and it was part of the strategy to have this professional provide greater support to LLS than the other elementary schools.

	Projected Enrollment 2019-20	Number of Administrators	Projected Students per Administrator	Number of Administrators	Projected Students per Administrator
CES	452	2.5	180.8	2.5	180.8
GFS	477	2.5	190.8	2.5	190.8
KHS	547	3.0	182.3	3.0	182.3
LLS	642	3.0	214.0	3.5	183.4
SES	546	3.0	182.0	3.0	182.0

Q: What is the confidence level that the grade 6 students will fit in our elementary schools?

A: Each principal has mapped out in detail the inclusion of grade 6 within their schools to outline a definite plan how the facilities would be used. These plans include the utilization of portables as necessary space.

Also, each school is developing contingency plans for any needed flex space if enrollment changes over the summer. Technology labs could go mobile next year (opening up a learning space in each school), science labs space could be flexed (opening them for other areas of instruction when not in use for science), and within each school there are some opportunities for some internal reconfiguration, e.g. reading instruction space of KHS within the Library shifting, LLS health office vacating the former classroom space to move to the main office where it was for years, etc. We understand that enrollment fluctuations over the summer could decrease or increase a section. Therefore, it is necessary to have some “flex” space that can be tapped if there are needs that arise for next year.

Q: What’s the rush to get portables approved by the Town?

A: Representatives of the District met with members of the SDE School Construction Unit recently to assess if Westport would be eligible for state reimbursement on portables. There are specific calculations based on existing square footage, as well as current and future enrollment numbers, which determine eligibility. The District was determined eligible for reimbursement, which should be about 20.71% of all costs associated with portables. If the District/Town do want to seek reimbursement, it adds to the timelines for acquiring portables, creating pressures to get the resolution authorizing the project and its funding to the BoF and RTM post haste. State processes make the process for acquiring portables more labor intensive on the part of the District/Town than if we just opted to go out directly and purchase them without financial support from the State.

Q: Why did the cost seem to escalate so greatly from the approximate \$1M proposal of the District for portables that was discussed in December?

A: The information provided in December was for 7 new portables and \$150k for refurbishing the existing 3 portables. It was solely for the portables themselves and did not include all soft costs of consultants, covered walkways, etc. The projection for these modular costs were extrapolated from concrete bid numbers of the District’s RFP for 6 portables at Bedford.

After exploring the feasibility of bringing the 3 existing portables back into active use, the Town advised us that since older portables were set to come off-line in 2006, it might be a better option to bring in new portables than try to refurbish them. This increased the number of new portables from 7 to 10. As the schools were scheduled, they requested 1 additional, and we included 2 at GHS as add alternatives, a safety net.

The number presented at the last BoE meeting was for almost double the number of portables, 13, and for a double length of time that we anticipated seeking them. The modular classroom company that

shared those projected costs would not provide any other projected cost scenarios for 1, 2, or 3 years, as it would disadvantage them in a bidding process. They wish to maintain their options of costing such modulars through a RFP bidding process.

Since the \$1M proposal in December, we have increased the number of requested portables. It is unlikely that the District would need portables for 5 years in any scenario presented – a shorter term of any contract would decrease cost as well. It is challenging that the District cannot know the exact numbers for portables until they bid them out in a competitive process. We must rely on metrics we have from a prior bid last fall and unofficial cost estimates from one company.

Q: Do you know which schools will be early elementary schools for next year?

A: We will have this confirmed by the end of the week, but we anticipate that SES and CES would go on the middle tier with BMS.

Q: How about class size differentials between schools for grade 6?

A: Class size can be adjusted with the addition/deletion of sections. Depending on how the enrollment numbers evolve for CES and LLS, there still would be 4 teachers of core at CES, but there might be 3 sections of classes and added FTE to LLS could increase the sections to 5 for language arts, social studies, and science. Math is already divided into many sections for grade 6 given the choices of levels.

There are 4.0 FTE reserve teachers for grade 6 included in the FY 2020 budget for any needs that we may have as the schedules finalize.