

# ← Grade Configuration Implications Worksheet



QUESTIONS

RESPONSES

34

## 34 responses



SUMMARY

INDIVIDUAL

Accepting responses



### What concern do you have which isn't listed above? (23 responses)

I would like to see the School Building Committee and the School Committee to seriously consider the rebuild of Winthrop as a neighborhood k-5 and put a plan in place for a renovation at Doyon in the immediate future and plan for a rebuild there eventually.

It is important to me that Winthrop school remains Preschool-5, under 500 students, and walkable within the downtown area

educational equity

community connection! the community is already split by two very different elementary schools, don't give one half the advantage of a brand new, high tech school, this will result in an even bigger gap between the two schools! Every new kindergarten parent will fight for their kids to be in the new Winthrop school, especially in the gray area!, and dissapointment and arguments will be the rule

One K-5 Building

Strongly encourage a K-5 Building (cross grade interactions between Students, Less transitions for children, more opportunity to unify education across Ipswich, decrease town segregation/separation, decrease long term costs)

Physical plant equity across the district for a given grade level

Siblings split between school; ensuring the best for the students

Yes

The overall size of the school and how that would impact student learning

Addressing the Town's future need and the School's needs as one. Facility needs are a town issue, not

just school issue.

This question is very confusing/compounded.

Safety is not listed, but hopefully is an obvious component.

Not a concern but curious to know the value of the HS/MS bond payments and when it is due to be paid off, how it is currently built into the real estate tax basis and looking forward how much of this amount will support what dollar value for this project.

I would like to voice my support for keeping two separate elementary schools. Specifically, I am voting for a new Winthrop school (with Doyon receiving funds for updating) and against both one large elementary school (775 students) and two elementary schools divided by grade (K-3, 4-5). My reasons for this are listed below.

If we retain Doyon in combined reconfiguration, how do we fund repurposing of that school?

My head is spinning, there are more concerns here than I could even imagine.

making sure every child in Ipswich experiences an equal educational experience

The gray area section of Ipswich where a student is neither a Doyon student or Winthrop student until student counts start coming in and a decision is made in August. This needs to be abolished should Winthrop and Doyon remain two separate elementary school and Winthrop is renovated. A clear delineated line needs to be drawn on the map - one side one school and that's that. We live within walking distance of Winthrop but our child attends Doyon. The best solution to the gray area is create one K-5 building thus eliminating a section of town whose K students have no idea where they are going until the end of summer.

If the two schools are combined into a new building on a separate site, what happens to the (2) vacant buildings? What are the costs to dismantle or re-purpose those buildings?

None

If the Winthrop site is chosen for renovation/new construction, I'm very concerned about the disruption it will cause in the daily education of our children. Modular units, constant noise and chaos of a construction site? No thank you.

All children need to be in a safe and healthy environment, without leaking roofs and bad air quality which currently exists in both elementary schools.

## Your Thoughts? - One K-5 Building (775 Students, New Building)

(32 responses)

The one large k-5 building would not serve the community of Ipswich. It would eliminate the sense of community that is instilled in both elementary schools. It would not serve the population that are walkers and in town students as the proposed site would eliminate walkers in general. No one will be walking to Bialek when having to deal with the train schedule and the safety implications it would pose. As close as it is to in town it is actually removed enough that it no longer would be a "member" of the community. To think one can create a small sense of community in a large building is a little bit contradictory. Why adopt a model that is actually becoming antiquated? Many states that have

communities with the large schools are now wanting to go back to the small school model as it poses a better learning environment on many levels and it supports 21st century learning better than the one large school model. Why disrupt something we already have, that does work and has been proven to have more success rates and then go and adopt a fading model proven to not work to the betterment of our children.

This is not a satisfactory solution. The school population would be much too large to allow children and families to feel connected. If the number of classes per grade doubles, the kids will not be able to know everyone in their grade as they do now and when they get mixed up from year to year they will really have a hard time forming close friendships with their classmates. 775 students is also too large for the school community to feel close. Currently, Sheila McAdams does an amazing job getting to know the parents of each child as they enter K - I don't think it would be possible for a principal to have that connection with the families of 775 students.

This would be the most equitable option. All students would benefit from the new building, not just those living in one part of town. I don't think size of student body is that big a concern as long as you have the right amount of teaching staff.

build one school but build it with two or three wings , like the Ms/HS, with a common core of administration, nurse, student services

1. Safety 2. How do you have a building that holds these many students and yet doesn't feel overwhelming for kids, teachers and parents?? 3. New Building must let natural light come in the classrooms, gymnasium, hallways, cafeteria !!! 'Bring the outside inside' feeling . Kids NEED natural light !

Strongly Support this option

Mitigates the consideration.

I would support this option

Yes!

Too large...at-risk population can often get "lost" in this size environment. Also the scheduling factor of so many kids with no auditorium and only one cafeteria used as a multi-purpose room.

Addressed BOTH elementary school needs (Winthrop & Doyon) at one time. Will save building costs, operational costs and maintenance costs for the IPS.

Yes

Sharing resources under the same roof seems intuitively advantageous. It might also address inequities in current curriculum delivery between the two schools. I imagine there may be some economy of scale in building a single facility also. These are all good things, obviously. My concerns lie mainly in losing sports fields at Bailek Park (if the building goes there), traffic congestion/access issues, and constructing a physical space that avoids the "big brick block" aesthetic that many people assume is the standard for a single larger school. I also worry about total cost - it may be more economical in the long run than dealing with Doyon later, but it will be tough to get the Town to vote for a \$60 million+ project.

Although I initially did not like the idea of a huge elementary school, I see great possibility here. One elementary school in the center of town brings the heart of the community to the center. It eliminates the us vs them that has occurred between the elementary schools for so long in terms of funding,

budgets, inequalities, etc.. It would also allow, I believe, for even more walkers and bikers to school if centrally located, as is the possibility at Bialek. Although I see possibility, I do have a few concerns; it must be configured to be two smaller schools sharing the small campus (2 preK-5, or a lower and upper school), and the town may not chip away at staffing, already at lean levels compared to other districts and states, because the schools must be maintained as two schools, not one across which resources can be stretched too thin.

I feel this is the best solution. It could be designed so 2 schools (K-2; 3-5) are within 1 building, sharing common facilities such as a central kitchen (but with separate cafeterias so some students are not eating too early and some too late), and auditorium/arts facility (hopeful), 1 large gymnasium that can be split into 2 as needed, STEAM and other dynamic learning environments. I also feel Bialek Park is the ideal location, since traffic can flow from Linebrook as well as Kimball Avenue or through to Route 133, not blocking traffic downtown as would be the case with the Winthrop School site.

Nobody I've talked to, and nothing I've read, has suggested that this is an appropriate, healthy, or desirable size for an elementary school. (This would be larger than both our middle school and our high school.) Students of an elementary school age need to feel part of a small, nurturing environment that knows them well. At the previous community meeting, the designers/architects stated that they can make a larger school feel smaller, but this is not an argument for creating a larger school if given the choice. It just says that it wouldn't be as bad as you might think. Right now, at both Winthrop and Doyon, families can know most, if not all, of the teachers, and all of the teachers know them. They can know most, if not all, of the staff, and all of the staff knows them. When they go to school events (art shows, plays, etc.) they know most, if not all, of everyone else who is there. They know this because the school is small and because it is a neighborhood school. All of this is lost if the school goes to 775 students.

The Holy Grail - meets goals of equity, horizontal and vertical integration of staff and students.  
Reassured by success of transition to Middle/High Model

I'd would absolutely prefer this option over breaking up K-3 and 4-5. I do not like the thought of my soon to be Kindergartner having to make so many transitions at that age. However, the size of the school is concerning. The idea of making one school but dividing it out similar to the High/Middle schools would be helpful. Meaning K-3 on one side while the "bigger" kids on the other. Making it divided enough that it's not overwhelming for the children with 775 students in the building. Also, as I'm sure most parents feel, the student to teacher ratio will stay as low as possible.

I would really like to see Ipswich keep the 2 smaller elementary school model vs. an almost 800 student building. That's great for middle/high school but the smaller schools work well for the younger children (in my opinion!)

similar design as middle /high school Pk-2 and 3-5 connected thru corridor

One building! Yes! Don't exclude doyon students. All Ipswich students deserve the opportunities awarded by a new, updated school building!!! One building with smaller learning communities!

Fantastic idea. Equity for all. The Amherst model is intriguing - with Wildwood and Fort River schools in one facility. A Doyon/Winthrop joint facility could be considered - However, a facility split K-2 and 3-5 would be more effective and not create some sort of meaningless dichotomy. If everyone is a 2nd grader in one facility what would it mean to be a Winthrop kid or a Doyon kid there - sort of odd. However, K-2 could be Winthrop and 3-5 could be Doyon if thereis a need to keep school names. Why not a new name? Regarding location, linking this new facility to the existing MS/HS property is worth considering - using Kimball as an access point off of Linebrook with a possible walking path to the new facility built on Bialek part land. Access via current Bialek parking lot would be a traffic nightmare as side streets such as Maple and Liberty would become cut throughs - unless Maple could become a

dead end st blocked at its end with Linebrook thereby bringing traffic down Washington and Rt 1A/133. Traffic patterns need to be looked at. This is a very forward thinking approach - allowing Ipswich to succeed in the future. All kids one building shows a town committed to education. I would guess this would make Ipswich a desirable community and more families will move in. No need to reconfigure or go through efforts to renovate Doyon in the future.

I think it would be the most equitable thing. I would prefer two new/or redone schools but whatever is the most feasible, equitable plan.

Renovate the two buildings separately now... or, build one new building now and then rebuild the other at later point. The original concerns were related to space/ health of the buildings which should remain the focus. The concern wasn't equity related to educational experience which seems to be the focus now.

One school would be impersonal and would lose the small community feel where everyone knows everyone and feels connected. You wouldn't be able to develop the same relationships with families and teachers over time. Traffic would be nuts and you would have to bus more students. Also, what would happen to both vacant, existing buildings?

best answer, most likely to gain own wide approval and gives all students equal opportunity

Best option IMO - no more "us and them", single school, resource synergies. Bialek location seems best option, all things considered (also makes school "part of town" not a place "out there in the woods" like Steward Elementary in Topsfield). Opens option for Public Safety Building as well. Winthrop playground can stay. Utilities are in place, good access for fire/police. Existing schools can continue to operate during construction.

Too big for this small community, could be a turnoff to new families looking to move to Ipswich. I fear at-risk kids will get lost in a huge school and parents won't feel connected, will lose that warm community feel that both schools have now.

Two weeks ago my answer to this question was a definitive NO. But...after reading all of the information provided, attending/watching community forums, reading the answers to community presented questions, thinking, thinking, thinking - I have completely changed my mind. I hate the idea of such a large school, but when we factor in equity in education, the idea of sharing resources, a new energy-efficient school and opening up a site location for the much needed public safety building - I believe I would support a single K-5 school at the Bialek Park site.

One K-5 to ensure a healthy learning environment for all children. Rolling the dice and keeping your fingers crossed that Doyon has this same opportunity is extremely risky. My children currently come home with headaches due to bad air quality at Doyon along with poor lighting. How long are we going to have to put buckets in our hallways to catch water from leaking roofs.

I feel that a one K-5 school with 775 students will drastically change the educational experience of our children for the worse. I understand there are districts that choose this more economical model and find design experts that create space in buildings that can maximize on small group experience, BUT, the site still holds 775 students. The feel of a small neighborhood school will be lost. As we all know, research can be found to support, large schools, small schools, any type of school you want. I easily found research that highlights many of the student benefits of a small school experience.

My two biggest concerns are: COST for the town; and the fact that the smaller school environment for younger children is better; bottom line: this is lost in a larger school campus

# Your Thoughts? - District K-3 Building (490 Students, New/Renovated Winthrop School)

(27 responses)

The opportunity for leadership among the 4th and 5th graders would be diminished not allowing for valuable learning opportunities that help form our next generation. This model could be a detriment to students who are struggling learners. 3rd grade is a pivotal year and to have to start a new school and become familiar with a whole new set of teachers etc could decrease the momentum in that child's educational path towards success in conquering reading and math skills necessary for life preparedness.

This is also not a satisfactory solution. There is a benefit to having all 6 grades in one location. The older kids have opportunities to mentor the younger students. Also, many families have 2 or 3 children in the school - it is much more convenient to have them located in the same place. Lastly, this sounds like it would really complicate the busing.

This option would be palatable if the shortcomings of Doyon building are addressed. Not ideal as this could cause transportation and other logistics problems for parents/caregivers.

NO !!! Kids this age should not have another transition, too much stress, and too complicated for families with children in different grades.

Second choice option - but I have concerns with the number of transitions my children will have to deal with, potential inconveniences for parents, and lack of cross grade interactions between students)

Mitigates the consideration.

I am not in favor of this option - it splits the siblings in different grades and makes it more challenging from a coordination standpoint for working parents. i.e., early pickups in 2 locations; EDP pick up in one and then the other increase the challenges for working parents

No

Additional transition for kids at a critical time for early learners and readers. Staff does not know these children or their learning/reading habits and they have to start over with all new people and lose educational ground during the "getting to know you phase". Also parents with kids at both schools who have one walking and one on bus, how do they get home in time for bus student if they are walking the other child home...huge safety issue unless you stagger start and end times at these two different schools.

Would need to relocate off Winthrop site. Area is way too small and traffic would be nightmare. Why shoehorn a building into a inferior lot? What do you do about Doyon? Come back to taxpayers in 5 years for another BOND to fix another school?!?! That would be short sighted!

I assume this means Winthrop would be K-3, and Doyon 4-5? (This could be clearer.) This is the most drastic shakeup in terms of configuration and would change the way we teach our kids. I would avoid it unless the School Committee could convince us otherwise.

Having a separate 4-5 building means a loss of student leadership for the upper students, and a loss of the pairing of classrooms for reading and science which are valuable to the students. It also creates problems of drop off and pickup for families with students in more than one elementary

school building.

Replacing Winthrop School for K-3 would be the next best solution, giving all Ipswich students the opportunity to benefit from a brand new school facility at some point. Yet, this does not solve the issues with an aging Doyon school. I think it would likely cost the down a lot more down the road if done this way.

The arguments against this idea, which were presented at the community meeting a few weeks ago, were clear and cogent: too many transitions for both staff and students; no consistency; not enough time for students to become comfortable in the environment before having to move on to the next school, to name a few. This, among all the ideas, would generate the least attachment, dedication, and commitment from the families and the community, and it would cause the students to feel transitional instead of stable, strangers instead of family members.

Second choice - leaves antiquated school to emerging upper elementary students with undersized common facilities

Not in favor of the K-3 model. I love and am so thankful for the interaction the younger children (K specifically) have with the 4th & 5th graders. My child (K) has had a hard transition from daycare/preschool to what she perceives to be an "enormous" elementary school. What has really helped her is the presence of the older kids offering support/comfort in various, often subtle, ways. I think the interaction she has had with 5th grade buddies and others has really helped her confidence level. I think it also offers the 4th and 5th graders a leadership opportunity which I hope she will take on when she's that age.

In this scenario, 4th and 5th graders would be at Doyon as it currently exists. No renovations for an age range that are learning, eager to use technology, etc. Do not support this option.

Not sure, might be ok.

Not in favor of this solution.

More transitions for students and families. Disjointed community feel, wouldn't know families and teachers as well over time. With larger grade level teams, harder to get work done with so many opinions and personalities. Students won't have the same leadership opportunities.

no, i like the the mix of older and younger students. older students benefit from helping the little ones and vice versa. too difficult for families with siblings

Adds another transition for the students. Doesn't address Doyon renovations. Winthrop location already leads to traffic issues. No "space gain" for other public buildings or areas. No synergies. No continuity for walkers/bike riders.

Not a fan of this one either. Too many transitions, splits siblings, transportation nightmare for parents.

No thank you. The K-5 experience has been so beneficial for my child (K).

This would be a second choice for me to ensure at least half of all of the childrens' educational experience at an elementary school in Ipswich is an environmentally healthy experience.

I believe in a K-8 model. I am not in favor of splitting up the elementary grades. A Pre-K-5th grade model allows for less student transitions, more family and student connections. In a K-5 school there is more of a potential for building leadership opportunities that enhance the school community. Older students who are given leadership opportunities and responsibilities in their school, typically, rise to

the challenge. They become the role models that the school, and their younger school mates need.

more transitions for children is not the answer; I don't support this option

## Your Thoughts? - Two K-5 Buildings (420 Students, New/Renovated Winthrop School)

(28 responses)

in keeping with the two k-5 buildings in Ipswich we would be supporting our community's population and their needs. Ipswich is a socio-economically diverse community and the two schools serve those populations very well. Each school has a deep sense of pride and community and to disrupt that would be a grave mistake to the community, the school communities and to the education model in Ipswich. We already have what other towns want, small neighborhood schools. Statistically small schools have proven higher graduation rates, less violence and disrespect among its peers, greater trusting and caring relationships between parents, between parents and the staff, and most importantly between the students and the teachers and their peers. Small schools create a better environment where students have opportunities to learn participation that is absolutely necessary to becoming a citizen of our society. If we want to do what is right for our kids and our community keeping the two k-5 buildings is the choice that is needed.

I think this refers to a solution similar to the current setup. I think this is the best option. A plan should be put in place to renovate Doyon in the near future as well.

This option will only perpetuate the ill will between Doyon and Winthrop communities.

Feels unfair to have a brand new 21st Century school and a dark and depressive and old building in the same school system.

Second choice option - but I have concerns with the number of transitions my children will have to deal with, potential inconveniences for parents, and lack of cross grade interactions between students)

This creates physical plant inequity between the schools, with not only a possible impact on student outcomes, but also on property values.

One school is nicer than the other. May be some impact but better alternative than 2 separate schools.

No

Keeps the community feel of the school and alleviates the budget used to maintain the old Winthrop to help ease Doyon while it awaits a renovation/new building.

Would need to relocate off Winthrop site. Area is way too small and traffic would be nightmare. Why shoehorn a building into a inferior lot? What do you do about Doyon? Come back to taxpayers in 5 years for another BOND to fix another school?!?! That would be short sighted!

This is a good choice assuming Winthrop stays on the same site. Does this option automatically dictate that? If not, and Winthrop could be rebuilt elsewhere, we might as well go with Option 1 (single building). My concern with a Winthrop-only option is building a critical mass of support among the

Doyon community. Also, won't we have to fix Doyon sooner rather than later anyway? When could we expect the state to fund a reconstruction of Doyon? Is/when they did, would it cost more down the road or less? In some ways, if we have the chance to address Doyon now (with a single school model), we might be wise to take it. Otherwise it feels like we are kicking the can. Thanks for listening.

I'm concerned that having one new or newly renovated school and one outmoded school would create inequality within the town. Real estate within the Winthrop district would be more desirable and valuable than the Doyon district, although taxpayers across all districts would be funding the new school. I keep hearing 'keep in mind that all the money saved on maintenance from Winthrop could go to Doyon' however I do not have confidence that this would actually happen.

Totally opposed to this. How could we possibly send one population of students to an old but newly renovated building and the other to a brand new everything state-of-the-art facility? This is wrong and will create tension and resentment. Furthermore, it will impact real estate values on the "other side of town".

As stated, this is the option that I support, and my reasons were largely stated above. There are political challenges to this--one elementary school will be new; the other one won't--but this should not be our chief concern. This is a challenge to be dealt with in the process of doing what's best for elementary education in Ipswich. There will be other challenges as well, but there are challenges to all the options. Fundamentally, keeping two schools would allow both to remain at a manageable size. It would allow both to remain neighborhood schools. It would allow the faculty and staff of both schools to remain at a size that promotes and enables frequent communication. Ultimately, at a smaller school, everyone, from students to staff to parents, would feel known and familiar instead of anonymous.

Last choice. Hoping to get away from this. Separate but equal not working.

Keeping things as they are, but with a new Winthrop I think it a fine options too. I grew up in town and attended Doyon. Both schools are great and if both schools remain I feel that is also a win

YES. This is my preference. Whether we renovate Winthrop or build an entirely new school on the same site, I prefer to keep the 2 elementary school model. As a Winthrop parent I am totally biased on location - being downtown offers so many education opportunities. Sure we can bus kids for a visit to the fire station, river, public library...but how cool is it that they can walk?

Admittedly I am not knowledgeable in this area, but I assume the additional funding is going to need to be approved via town meeting? We saw how tough it was to pass the override, I don't even want to think about how hard it would be to get these people to approve a \$60+ million dollar 700+ student school!!! If it gets rejected then what to do we have? Are we back at square one?

Not a good idea. This immediately creates inequity. As discussed above, the gray area becomes a real issue and possibly creates an area of town where families will not move. Another issue could be that those homes near Doyon become less desirable as families view the renovated/new Winthrop as a real draw. Can envision lack of opportunities for kids at Doyon and a real split once students from both schools merge at the middle school.

No. This would leave Doyon completely behind.

I'm in favor of this solution. Emphasis should also be on also renovating Doyon potentially through grant funding and fundraising. This is how Winthrop was able to build the beautiful playground... Vision, passion, grass roots organizing to raise funds, and finally a willingness to do the labor ourselves.

Would preserve small school, community connected feel. Might be passed more readily by the town than two new schools or one giant school.

really leaves doyon students at a disadvantage. unlikely for town to approve funding for much needed doyon repairs if they've just spent for a new winthrop

Doesn't address Doyon renovation. More "us/them". No synergies. Worst option IMO. Only Winthrop would benefit.

This is my favorite, it maintains the individual school cultures and neighborhood feel, and keeps the K5 model with mixed ages. Either Winthrop or Bialek sites would allow for a lot of students to continue to walk/bike to school. The one big downside is we wouldn't get equity for all students with this project, but I think that's okay if it's the right choice for the town. We would have to prioritize Doyon as a town in the near future, and keep that promise. Two K5 schools allow for more flexibility in the future instead of having all of our eggs in one basket (read: all of our babies in one school)! I truly feel the heart of a school are it's people and not the structure (with all due respect to architects), and the people would stay the same in this model. It stinks that Doyon wasn't chosen for this project, but they may have to wait their turn for a new school. I would be fine having to wait for a new Winthrop if Doyon had been chosen by the MSBA. I think Winthrop is a magical place with amazing people, and my kids are thriving there despite the dilapidated conditions and outdated facility. We need to make the right choice for the town and that may not be killing two birds with one stone!

Two weeks ago...yes, this is definitely what I wanted. Now I think one school may be the answer to so many of the decisions this town is facing as we look toward the future. But will a \$62+/- million project pass at town meeting/the polls, even if partially reimbursed by the state? Buckle up and hold on tight.

Not a viable option. Too much disparity and too many unknown variables for future funding. EPA estimates the learning process from a new building facility can increase up to 17%. All children should be able to benefit from this potential simultaneously.

I support this model for a few reasons. One, is that it wont be an additional burden on the taxpayers. I am fearful that the other larger models would not pass at Town Meeting, in light of the last override tax increase for the schools. This is a wonderful opportunity to update one of our schools, as has been done historically in Ipswich with each building project of the past.

I think this is the best option; it is working within our 'means' as a town and for the purpose of the grant; it is also best for children/neighborhoods/the town to maintain the smaller school culture.