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Welcome to School Year 2024-2025!

Dear Westbrook Community!

It is our utmost pleasure and honor to welcome everyone to an exciting year at Westbrook Elementary School! We are thrilled to welcome your children to the Westbrook Community for the 2024-2025 school year. We hope you are having a fantastic summer and are as excited as we are about beginning what will be a remarkable and rewarding school year.

Westbrook staff is committed to working collaboratively to continue the robust practices and elevate the experience our students receive. Our children will learn, grow, and thrive in an accepting environment that provides for their academic and social-emotional needs. We also look forward to hearing your thoughts and ideas throughout the year! The school-community partnership is paramount to the success of our students, and your input is valued.

Our staff leadership team has been meeting during the summer to make plans for the upcoming school year. At the summer leadership meetings, the team worked on all aspects of Westbrook. We finalized scheduling, analyzed data, refreshed our Westbrook vision, mission, and purpose, implemented MCPS initiatives, revised and updated daily procedures, and had professional development to enhance our capacity to provide an anti-racist, anti-biased environment for all our students. All staff has participated in at least two days over the summer for the new English Language Arts curriculum adopted by MCPS. We are thrilled to be in a place where we can integrate the Science of Reading framework using the CKLA curriculum from Amplify. There will be some changes in our teaching practices in all ELA classrooms as we enhance the educational opportunity for our students and provide intentional intervention and enrichment based on achievement data. This is an exciting time! We are committed to ensuring everyone's inclusiveness and acceptance. Through social-emotional learning and deepening our understanding of ourselves and others, we will continue to build on kindness, acceptance, and inclusion. Westbrook welcomes everyone!

Additionally, we expanded our work on the School Improvement Plan (SIP) with specific goals for various subgroups of students in reading, math, student well-being, and climate and culture. We are excited to continue to gain your thoughts and input as well. Your partnership and voice matter. Remember that my door remains open to you, and please do not hesitate to contact me in whatever medium is best (email - Karen_m_Cox@mcpsmd.org, phone, in-person, virtual).

Our S.O.A.R. expectations have positively impacted student accountability and will continue to be a foundation of Westbrook. With feedback from students, parents, and faculty, we have updated our S.O.A.R. expectations. Please see the parent dashboard for more information on S.O.A.R. at Westbrook.

Westbrook Elementary School's anticipated enrollment for the upcoming school year is 460 students. We plan to have three kindergarten classes, three first-grade classes, four second-grade classes, three third-grade classes, three fourth-grade classes, and four fifth-grade classes. You can find school supplies by grade level on our [website](#).

The start and end times of the school day remain the same as last year. Doors open at 8:50 am. Students will be considered tardy after 9:00 am unless due to a bus issue. Dismissal will begin at 3:20 pm. For early release days, dismissal will occur at 12:55 pm.

If your student takes the bus to or from school, please review the FY25 [bus routes and schedule](#). Please arrive at the bus stop at least 5 minutes before departure. Parents are responsible for their child on the way to the bus stop, at the bus stop, and on the way home from the bus stop. Please arrange for a caregiver or responsible adult to meet your student at the bus stop and ensure their safety. You can find more bus expectations on the [parent dashboard](#) under transportation.

The school year starts on **Monday, August 26**, and we will have our annual Open House on **Friday, August 23, from 2 to 3 p.m.** **When attending our Open House and other school functions, please respect the neighborhood and do not park in prohibited locations.**

Over the summer, we had a few staffing changes, as noted below:

Ms. Kelsey White has graciously agreed to teach 2nd grade, as we lost an allocation due to enrollment. We are grateful for her talent and flexibility!

Ms. Emily Taylor has taken a position at Bradley Hills Elementary School.

Mrs. Joan McCabe moved to Maine over the summer to spend more time with her family.

Mrs. Cari Jacobsen moved to Connecticut over the summer to continue teaching and spend more time with her family.

Ms. Brooke Lundy has accepted a position as a Science teacher at Shady Grove Middle School to be closer to home.

Ms. Valerie Straus has accepted a full-time music teaching position at Sequoyah Elementary School.

Ms. Elaine Gaskil has decided to be a para at Garrett Park ES to be closer to home.

We are excited to welcome:

Ms. Kate Sparks is a new fifth-grade teacher! She had previously subbed for PE while Mrs. Jennifer Griffin was on maternity leave.

We are anxiously awaiting our new music teacher, Ms. Julia Gill, who is moving from New York and is an enthusiast for Musical theater!

We are excited to welcome Lillian Braun and her extensive talents as our new School Psychologist!

We are pleased to welcome Ambreen Tahir as our new Reading Initiative teacher!

Our SESES team is excited to welcome Nicole Kumnji, Samantha Love, and Michelle Santos (Who comes to us from the Philippines and has ten years of special education experience!)

We look forward with excitement to these new staff members who will work with passion and commitment alongside our returning dedicated team to make this year a success for our students and families! Every staff member joining us is dedicated and student-centered, bringing a wealth of experience to Westbrook!

Please join us in welcoming the new staff to the Westbrook family!

You will find a complete staff roster on our website and as a link in the [Parent Dashboard](#)! There are many resources linked. However, let us know what else you want to see or what more information we can provide. Should any of the links be inactive, please let me know. The Parent Dashboard is a living document that is updated regularly.

Continued and consistent communication will occur through the weekly Principal email or phone call on Sundays. We will continue communicating with weekly classroom email blasts and monthly grade-level newsletters. Information is also available on our school website.

We look forward to working with you to provide our children with the best educational program, ensuring we attend to the “whole child.” We will continue to work diligently to build opportunities for student achievement success that incorporate strong relationships. We are fully committed to creating the conditions to nurture and attend to all our students' needs.

Classroom and teacher assignments will be shared via email on Thursday, August 22nd, around 3:00 p.m. Watch for this exciting email!

Mark your calendars for:

- **August 23rd**, from 2-3 pm. For Open House. Open House is a chance for you, your child, and your family to join us at Westbrook, walk through the school, meet your child's teacher, and drop off any items (supplies, donations, etc.).

- **August 24th:** The [MCPS Back to School Fair](#) is held at Westfield Wheaton from 10:00 to 1:00 p.m.
- **August 26th** is the **First Day of School**. We ring a bell at 8:50 as we open the building for students to enter. There will be cones with grade level/ teacher names for the morning line-up outside.
 - **Kindergarten** parents are encouraged to attend our **Boo Hoo/Yahoo Breakfast** (coffee and treats) after dropping off their children. Please come to the front office to go to the media center to meet other families, PTA and FOWS members, and the administration visit.
- **Sept. 6th** is our Annual Back To School Picnic in the evening. Bring a picnic blanket and beverages to eat with your pre-ordered pizza (order information and details are forthcoming). Time TDB in the early evening.
- **September 12th** is Back to School Night, one of the most important nights of the school year. It will be in person. More details to come! Time TDB in the early evening.

As we start the school year, I want to remind you that Westbrook is a place that welcomes all! We are a school that is inclusive to all in our community, no matter one's race, gender, beliefs, needs, or sexual orientation. As determined by MCPS, there is no notification of materials used for instruction to the community, nor is there any opt-out policy for instruction, except for the fifth grade Family Life Curriculum in the Spring. Fifth Grade families will be invited to a meeting in late February on this topic. We will provide a diverse, inclusive, and rigorous curriculum to all our students in the year ahead!

[The Parent Dashboard](#) (still under construction) is a living dashboard that is often adjusted. Please bookmark this for future use! The school [website](#) is updated frequently, so please check back when needed.

In closing, I am thrilled to start my 8th year as the principal of Westbrook Elementary School! We have a great community, outstanding students, and a dedicated staff! As I begin my 11th year as an administrator and 26th year as an educator, I am energized and grateful for the unwavering support of our dynamic school community, incredible staff, and tremendous students. Remember, we value your thoughts and input, and please do not hesitate to contact me with questions or ideas.

Honored to serve the Westbrook Community,

Karen Cox

Karen Cox,
Principal

and the talented Mrs. Linda Johnson,
Assistant Principal