

Upper Elementary School

Frequently Asked Questions

Why did the district reconfigure grades?

The reconfiguration of grades is a result of years of research and development to provide even more opportunities to students while creating an innovative, student-centered educational environment.

Reconfiguration allows for more programming opportunities at elementary schools, a systematic transition from elementary to secondary, opportunities for preschool classes, and a ninth-grade experience more aligned with traditional high school, including course offerings and programs.

Will the Upper Elementary follow an elementary or middle school schedule?

Fifth-grade students will be organized into two-teacher teams. Students will be assigned a single teacher who will team-teach with another teacher. There will be a similar daily routine as students have now. A group of four fifth-grade teachers will be considered a “House”.

Sixth-grade students will be organized into four-teacher teams, or “Houses”, with one teacher per core content area.

Consistent with an elementary schedule, all students will receive ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies instruction daily along with a daily special class.

Will students switch classes or teachers?

Fifth-grade students will stay with their primary teacher for ELA and Math while Social Studies and Science may be taught by their primary teacher or the other teacher in their two-teacher team.

Sixth-grade students will rotate together as a class through ELA, Math, Social Studies, and Science within their “House”.

“Houses” will be arranged by clusters or classrooms that are next to each other with fifth graders on the first floor and sixth graders on the second floor.

Unlike a secondary school with bells and periods, “Houses” will go to lunch, recess, and their Specials at the same time as a class traveling together.

Will the class size change?

Classes typically range from 25-28 students and will not exceed 32 students.

What special classes will be offered?

Along with the four core academic areas, fifth graders will have Music, Art, STEM, and Gym specials.

Sixth graders will have the same core academic areas, including Advanced Math, as they do now and the following non-core courses, including STEM, Gym, Art, World Language, Band, and Choir.

Will report cards change?

No, there are no changes to the report cards. Fifth and sixth grade will report on trimesters with fifth continuing with standards-based report cards while sixth grade will continue with traditional letter grades.

Will students still have recess?

Yes, two brand-new and age-appropriate playgrounds will be constructed for students to access during lunch breaks and recess.

Will students use lockers?

Although students will have lockers available, they will not be a necessity. Students will be slowly eased into the use of lockers.

How will 5th and 6th graders intermingle?

Fifth and sixth graders will only intermingle before and after school. "Houses" will move as a group to specials, lunch, and recess.

Fifth-grade classrooms will be on the first floor while sixth-grade classrooms will be on the second floor.

Will there be curriculum or assessment changes?

No, the curriculum and assessments will remain the same.

Drop off & pick up - Bussing, parent drop-off, and pedestrian

Buses will pick up and drop off at the south end of the building. Parent drop-off will be at the north loop of the building. This mirrors the same drop-off and pick-up routine currently adhered to at Patrick Henry. Students will be allowed to enter 10 minutes before the start of the school day.

Will before and after-school care change?

Champions will provide on-site before and after-school care at the Upper Elementary School.

What administrative and support staff will be available within the Upper Elementary?

The building will provide comprehensive staffing services to all students as follows: 1 Principal

(Mr. Roger Gurganus), 1 Assistant Principal (Mrs. Diana Baldensperger), 2 Counselors, 1 Social Worker, 2 Academic Interventionists, 1 EL Teacher, 1 Speech and Language Pathologist, and a comprehensive Special Services team.

What will happen with the 5th-grade camp experience?

In the spring of 2024, fourth graders will attend a day camp at Howell Nature Center while fifth graders will have the overnight camp experience. Beginning in the 2025-26 school year, the fourth graders will continue with the day trip to Howell Nature Center while fifth-grade students experience something new at the Upper Elementary School.

What will be a typical day for a 5th grader?

8:30 am - Homeroom
8:40 am - Specials (Gym, Art, Music, STEM)
9:35 am - ELA
11:30 am - Lunch and Recess
12:05 pm - Math
1:30 pm - Science
2:10 pm - Social Studies
2:50 pm - Academic Support and Extension
3:15 pm - Dismissal

What will be a typical day for a 6th grader?

8:30 am - Homeroom
8:40 am - Math
9:40 am - ELA
10:40 am - Specials (Gym, Art, STEM, World Language)
11:35 am - Academic Support and Extension OR Band/Choir
12:35 pm - Lunch and Recess
1:10 pm - Social Studies
2:10 pm - Science
3:15 pm - Dismissal