

The background image shows a classroom setting. In the foreground, two young girls are standing with their backs to the camera. The girl on the left has long dark hair and is wearing a yellow long-sleeved shirt under a blue jumper dress. The girl on the right has long blonde hair and is wearing a light pink hoodie and blue jeans. They are both holding large white sheets of paper. In the background, other students are seated at yellow tables, and a teacher or adult is visible. The room is filled with educational materials, including books, a globe, and storage bins.

The Public Schools of Southborough

Educational Plan

Margaret A. Neary Elementary School Building
Project

MODULE 3: PRELIMINARY DESIGN PROGRAM

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION

- a. Visioning Summary
- b. Overarching Project Goals & Priorities
- c. Participants

2. GRADE & SCHOOL CONFIGURATION POLICIES

3. SCHOOL COMMITTEE CLASS SIZE POLICY

4. SCHOOL SCHEDULING METHODS

5. TEACHING AND LEARNING

- a. Administrative and Academic Organization
- b. Curriculum and Instructional Practices
- c. Mathematics
- d. English Language Arts/ Literacy
- e. Social Studies
- f. Science Technology and Engineering (STE)
- g. World Languages
- h. Digital Literacy, Computer Science, and Instructional Technology
- i. Library Media Science
- j. Visual Arts Programs
- k. Performing Arts Programs (Music)
- l. Wellness - Physical Education and Health

6. SPECIAL EDUCATION

- a. Academic Support Programming (ELD, Literacy, Math)
- b. CASTLE
- c. TLP

7. TEACHER PLANNING, COLLABORATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

8. LUNCH PROGRAMS

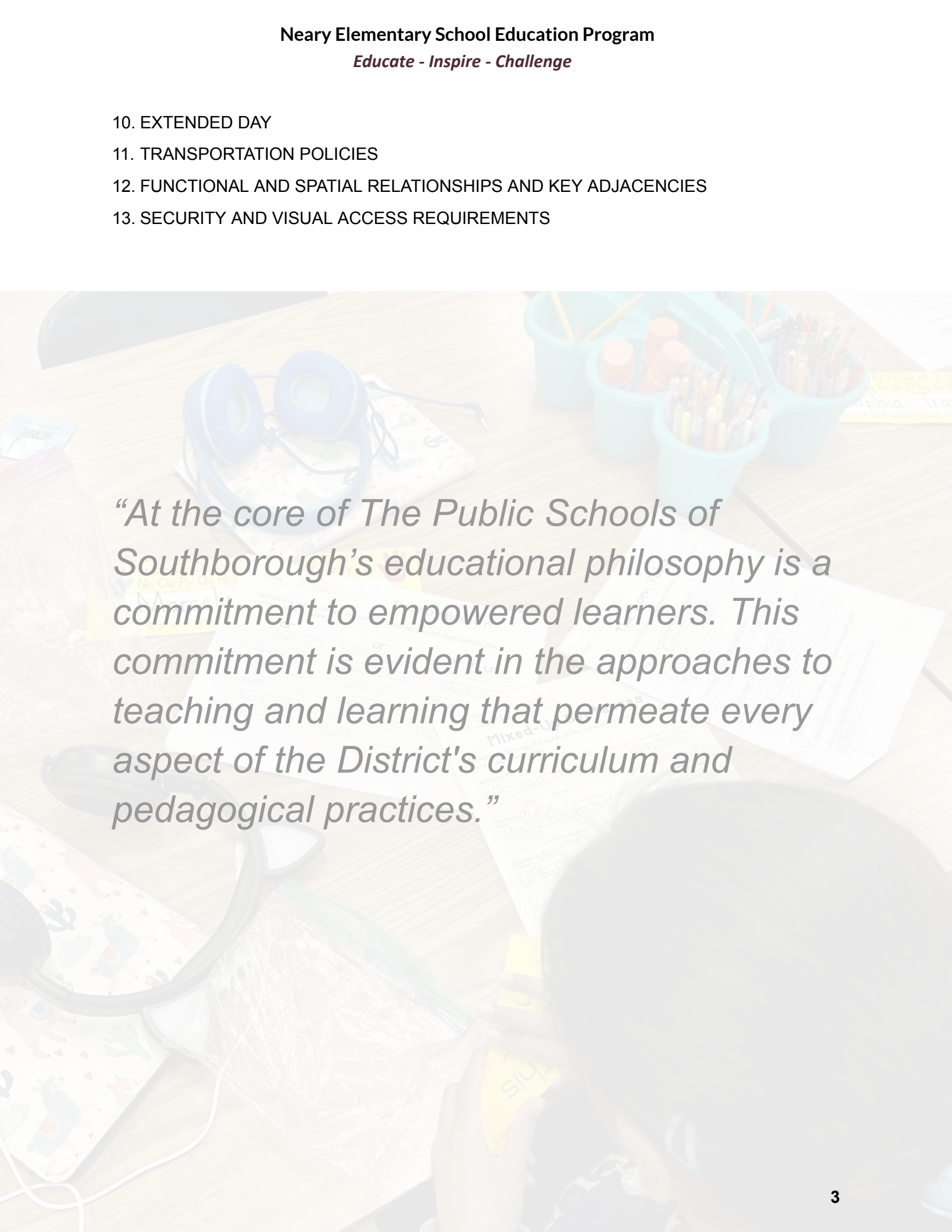
9. HEALTH OFFICE

10. EXTENDED DAY

11. TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

12. FUNCTIONAL AND SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND KEY ADJACENCIES

13. SECURITY AND VISUAL ACCESS REQUIREMENTS

A photograph of a child's desk, viewed from above. The desk is light-colored wood. On it are several blue plastic containers holding pens and pencils. A pair of blue headphones lies on a patterned cloth. A child's hand is visible at the bottom, holding a yellow card. A large, semi-transparent quote is overlaid on the center of the image.

“At the core of The Public Schools of Southborough’s educational philosophy is a commitment to empowered learners. This commitment is evident in the approaches to teaching and learning that permeate every aspect of the District’s curriculum and pedagogical practices.”

INTRODUCTION

The Public Schools of Southborough, guided by its mission to Educate, Inspire, and Challenge, embarked on a forward-looking journey in the 2019-2020 academic year with the strategic planning process culminating in *Vision 2026: Educate, Inspire, Challenge*. This roadmap, crafted through the collaborative efforts of a broad spectrum of stakeholders—including parents, community members, educators, students, and school and District leadership—sets the course for an educational experience that not only meets today's standards but anticipates the needs and possibilities of tomorrow.

In the subsequent year, the District's commitment to inclusivity and excellence prompted a District equity audit in partnership with an outside consulting group, a critical step toward understanding and enhancing how the District's policies, practices, and systems affect all members of the school community, especially those historically marginalized.

In *Vision 2026: Educate, Inspire, Challenge*, the District articulates the profile of a learner who will navigate the complexities of the modern world as:

Collaborators

- Enrich the learning of self and others through teamwork.
- Solicit and respect diverse perspectives and contributions.
- Seek, contribute, and react to feedback to achieve shared outcomes.
- Recognize and leverage strengths to build collective commitment, action, and understanding.

Critical and Creative Thinkers

- Transfer and connect knowledge and skills to deepen understanding.
- Demonstrate thinking that is clear, rational, open-minded, and informed by evidence.
- Use disciplinary knowledge and skills in routine and innovative ways.
- Make informed decisions, solve problems, and use a variety of tools to deepen learning.

Communicators

- Articulate thoughts and ideas using oral, written, and non-verbal communication skills for a range of purposes and audiences.
- Listen to decipher meaning, including knowledge, values, attitudes, and intentions.
- Use technological skills and contemporary digital tools to explore and exchange ideas.

Socially and Civically Engaged

- Demonstrate personal, civic, and social integrity through ethical and empathetic behaviors.
- Recognize individual and communal impact on others and the natural world.
- Value and embrace diverse cultures and unique perspectives through mutual respect and open dialogue.

Growth-Oriented

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

- Cultivate positive attitudes and habits about learning.
- Pursue one's own interests and curiosity to experience new learning.
- Consistently improve the quality of one's own thinking by skillfully analyzing, assessing, and reconstructing.
- Persist to accomplish difficult tasks and to overcome academic and personal barriers to meet goals.

Healthy and Balanced

- Develop and demonstrate awareness, sensitivity, concern, and respect to connect with self and others' feelings, opinions, experiences, and cultures.
- Use reflective practices to understand one's personal strengths, challenges, and passions.
- Make choices to support a lifestyle that is healthy, both physically and mentally.
- Demonstrate resilience through the ability to manage emotions, stress, and challenges.

The Public Schools of Southborough's work is anchored by six core values that guide all members of the learning organization: Integrity, Empathy, Inclusivity, Equity, Perseverance, and Respect. These values guide all interactions and inform its policies and practices, ensuring that the educational environment is supportive, challenging, and accessible to all.

To realize the District's vision, the District's work is centered around five strategic objectives:

- Empowering Learners: Implement instructional practices that engage students in developing and demonstrating their knowledge and skills through rigorous, innovative, and relevant learning experiences.
- Equity of Opportunity: Provide all students access to challenging and culturally responsive learning experiences that meet their individual needs.
- Healthy and Balanced Learners: Prioritize the social, emotional, and physical well-being of students.
- Educator Learning and Leadership: Demonstrate continual growth through professional collaboration.
- Finance and Operations to Support Teaching and Learning: Develop, support, and operate sustainable, functional, and well-maintained schools.

In the District's commitment to continuous improvement, it completed an equity audit to better understand and address the disparities within its systems, policies, and practices. Recognizing that true equity is an ongoing process, the District is committed to fostering an environment where every member of the community is equipped to view their roles through an equity lens, continuously working towards an inclusive and equitable educational landscape.

In a time of rapid change and complex challenges, The Public Schools of Southborough remain committed to educating, inspiring, and challenging ALL students to be prepared for a modern world.

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

The Statement of Interest submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) in 2022 articulates that the current Margaret A. Neary Elementary School building only allows for basic functionality and is insufficient for the delivery of the educational program. While maintained over the years, the majority of the facility's building systems and components are nearing the end of life expectancy. To support this determination, the District contracted with Vertex Companies, Inc. to complete a Facilities Conditions Assessment (March 2021). This assessment confirmed the need for renovation or replacement of the roof, electrical, and other building modifications to meet building code requirements. The District's priority is to modernize the Margaret A. Neary Elementary School to a condition that rectifies current deficiencies and satisfies projected future requirements for educational programs, such as spaces with integrity for world language, art, music, science, and technology.

At the core of The Public Schools of Southborough's educational philosophy is a commitment to empowered learners. This commitment is evident in the approaches to teaching and learning that permeate every aspect of the District's curriculum and pedagogical practices. By infusing technology seamlessly into daily activities, the District enables students to explore and pursue their interests and allows teachers to provide all students access to learning. This educational philosophy is further enriched by an integrated curriculum that promotes inquiry-based and interdisciplinary experiences, seamlessly incorporating STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) principles.

Central to the District's approach is the application of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles and a multi-tiered system of support. These frameworks ensure that instruction is accessible and challenging for all learners, providing multiple pathways to understanding, engagement, and expression. By doing so, the District guarantees that every student has the opportunity to exercise agency in their learning journey.

Small group instruction is pivotal to ensure the success of each student. Through targeted and responsive teaching methods, students receive the support and enrichment they need to thrive socially, emotionally, and academically.

Recognizing the essential role of professional collaboration, The Public Schools of Southborough have invested significantly in developing a culture of professional collaboration among educators. Teacher teams are an integral part of our educational ecosystem, regularly convening to analyze achievement data, exchange insights on student work, develop instructional resources, and plan coherent and impactful lessons.

To further support this culture of collaboration, it is essential that a new facility is designed with the dual purpose of enhancing professional collaboration among staff during the school day and providing versatile spaces for educators to engage with families in both private and public settings. A design needs to include spaces that are adaptable and promote effective collaboration.

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

In 2022, The Public Schools of Southborough, in collaboration with the Town of Southborough's Capital Planning Committee - School Research Subcommittee, completed a [Grade Level Configuration Evaluation](#). The evaluation took into consideration current facilities, enrollment, and educational programming. The evaluation resulted in a recommendation to study the reduction of the number of elementary school transitions from two transitions to one transition. Currently, elementary students experience school transitions from grades 1-2 and grades 3-4.

As part of the feasibility study, the District is required to study three enrollment alternatives: 1) Grades 4-5, 2) Grade 3-5, and 3) Grades 2-5.

Alternative 1:

Grades PreK-1: Mary E. Finn Elementary School

Grade 2-3: Albert S. Woodward Memorial Elementary School

Grades 4-5: Margaret A. Neary Elementary School

Alternative 2:

Grades PreK-1: Mary E. Finn Elementary School

Grade 2: Albert S. Woodward Memorial Elementary School

Grades 3-5: Margaret A. Neary Elementary School

Alternative 3:

Grades K-1: Albert S. Woodward Memorial Elementary School

Grades 2-5: Margaret A. Neary Elementary School

The District's recommendation, which was considered during MSBA's Eligibility Phase, was the 2-5 grade configuration as it provides benefits, which include:

1. Provides for greater collaboration and vertical curriculum alignment between grades 2-5;
2. Allows and maximizes District resources and builds a greater sense of school community;
3. Reduces the number of school transitions;
4. Provides more opportunity to maximize resources (people and materials);
5. siblings within the grade range to be at the same school, facilitating both bus transportation for children in the same family as well as parental transportation to and from school and/or extended careand;
6. Reduces the amount of time students are on buses and the number of transportation routes, which is a logistical benefit as well as an avoidance of significant additional costs that would require financial resources to be redirected from the educational program (see accompanying document);

Visioning Summary

In the winter of 2024, members of The Public Schools of Southborough – including leadership, staff, parents, and community members – participated in visioning and programming sessions

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

led by Educational Planner Mike Pirollo (MLP Integrated Design) and Arrowstreet. Each session was part of a collaborative process designed to inform the Margaret A. Neary Elementary School Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Feasibility Study and pre-design process.

Utilizing school tours, observational building walk-throughs, program verification meetings, and visioning sessions, participants worked through a step-by-step process aimed at capturing their thinking around the following key areas:

- Educational, architectural, and community goals and priorities
- Child development, including the physical, academic, and social-emotional needs of the elementary learner
- Impacts of various grade configurations and design enrollments
- Vision of teaching and learning, including practices, strategies, programs, and structures
- A vision of the ideal learning environment, including space types, design features, and adjacencies

Overarching Project Goals & Priorities:

At the core of the District's educational vision are a series of overarching goals:

- Students and teachers are at the heart
- Spaces and instructional practices that support innovation in education
- Supporting a climate of belonging, community, connection, and well-being
- Flexible, adaptable space to support equitable and active access
- Opportunities for outdoor and indoor connection
- An academically, financially, and environmentally sustainable building
- Long-term adaptability
- A logical and efficient building

Participants

Name	Title:
Greg Martineau	Superintendent
Stefanie Reinhorn	Assistant Superintendent
Kathleen Valenti	Principal
Steve Mucci	Principal
Clayton Ryan	Principal
Megan Kelty	ELA Coordinator
Helene Desjardins	Assistant Director of Student Support
Jennifer Lipton-O'connor	Coordinator of SEL
Kathy Lizotte	Mathematics Coordinator
Julie Doyle	Director of Instructional Technology
Mary Ellen Duggan	District Wellness Coordinator and Nurse Leader
Selvi Oyola	Director of Multilingual Learners & Equity
Jennifer Henry	Early Childhood Administrator
Jason Malinowski	Neary Building Committee Chairperson
Roger Challen	School Committee Member

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

Chelsea Malinowski	School Committee Member
David Finneran	Neary Teacher & STA Representative
Kristin Theve	Neary Teacher
Jen Turieo	Neary Teacher
Lisa Goulet	Woodward Teacher
Jill Henebury	Woodward Teacher
Kristin Peterson	Finn K Teacher (K Team Leader)
Alysun Stephens	Finn Teacher
Nutan Mathew	Specialist
Tiffany Goode	Specialist
Jeanette Morgan	Finn Music Teacher (Specialist Team Leader)
Gela Ebert	ELPAC Co-Chair
Marie Sajous	ELPAC Co-Chair
Sarah Fulton	PTO
Stephanie Iodice	PTO
Kristin Gould	PTO
Matt Gilmore	NSPAC
Andrea Hamilton	NSPAC
Tim Davis	Director of Southborough Recreation
Kathy Cook	Select Board Member
Ryan Newell	Police Chief

GRADE & SCHOOL CONFIGURATION

School Facilities Summary

The Public Schools of Southborough has four school facilities, serving grades PreK-8. All of the District's schools have strong school cultures, exceptional faculties and staff dedicated to students, and parents and guardians who are invested in The Public Schools of Southborough.

Mary E. Finn Elementary School

The Mary E. Finn Elementary School is an early childhood center currently serving students in grades Pre-Kindergarten to Grade One. The building was originally constructed in 1967 and was then renovated and expanded in 2000 to 76,000 square feet. The building's renovation was designed for the District's youngest learners.

Albert S. Woodward Memorial Elementary School

The Albert S. Woodward Memorial Elementary School currently serves students in Grade Two and Grade Three. The building site was the original middle school for Southborough until the P. Brent Trottier Middle School was built in 1998. The original building was torn down and the footprint was used to build the 68,000-square-foot facility, which opened in 2004.

Margaret A. Neary Elementary School

Originally constructed in 1970, the Margaret A. Neary Elementary School currently serves Grade Four and Grade Five. The building is a 62,736 gross square foot facility on a single level located on an eighty-one (81) acre site. The Margaret A. Neary Elementary School is the only

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

Southborough school that has not yet been renovated.

P. Brent Trottier Middle School

The P. Brent Trottier Middle School established in 1998 and expanded in 2004 is a 130,000 square foot middle school for students in Grade Six, Grade Seven, and Grade Eight. The three-year experience provides students with the skills and knowledge to be successful in high school.

Current student enrollment in the five schools as of March 2024 is:

School	Current Grade Configuration	Current Enrollment
Mary E. Finn Elementary School (Finn)	PreK-1	260
Albert S. Woodward Memorial Elementary School (Woodward)	2-3	248
Margaret A. Neary Elementary School (Neary)	4-5	282
P. Brent Trottier Middle School (Trottier)	6-8	409

Current

The Margaret A. Neary Elementary School has nineteen classrooms, fourteen of the classrooms are split evenly between fourth and fifth grades, and five of the classrooms are designated as Central Office. Each classroom, designed with a dividing wall for coats and student belongings results in a reduced instructional area. This constraint, coupled with limited storage within classrooms, necessitates the use of additional spaces within the school to house curriculum supplies and materials.

Class sizes at Neary average between 18 to 22 students, yet the infrastructure, particularly in specialty areas like art and music, falls short of optimal educational environments. These subjects are taught in spaces not originally intended for their respective disciplines, affecting the quality of instruction and student engagement. There are no designated spaces for string lessons and instruments can be found lining the hallways. Similarly, the library's inadequate wiring and infrastructure hinder the library media specialist in offering STE infused media classes, failing to align with the educational needs of both teachers and students.

Physical education faces its own set of challenges, with two small gymnasiums that complicate the delivery of indoor PE classes.

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

The English Language Development Program relies on modular classrooms that, despite being over two decades old and initially intended for temporary use, are still in operation today. These modules fall short of the spatial and environmental standards required for effective learning.

Special education and related services grapple with spatial constraints, utilizing whatever spaces are available, including areas not designed for instructional purposes. Meetings and administrative tasks often take place in less-than-ideal conditions, such as unheated conference spaces, shared offices, or converted closets used as offices. Grade-level teacher meetings are confined to the limited space of available classrooms.

The electrical infrastructure across Neary is antiquated, with a scarcity of outlets hampering the use of modern technological tools, thereby impacting teaching and learning.

Culinary services are compromised by an inoperative kitchen, including inadequate refrigeration and cooking appliances, requiring the P. Brent Trottier Middle School to function as a satellite kitchen, with meals being transported to Neary.

Lastly, parent pickup and drop-off is currently situated in the main parking lot and presents issues for pedestrian safety.

The District-run Southborough Extended Day Program functions as a before and after-school program for Southborough students. Currently, there is no office space for the program nor designated storage. The extended day educators use a partitioned portion of the faculty lunch room for storage and other make-shift spaces.

In the current grade configuration, school transitions demand significant efforts from the dedicated teachers and staff at Finn, Woodward, and Neary. They invest considerable time and energy in welcoming new families and ensuring a smooth progression for outgoing students. Since each elementary school is a two-year span, grade levels move quickly from entry to exit in the transition process. The process, starting as early as January, involves extensive inter-school meetings aimed at fostering a seamless transition, reflecting the commitment of District educators to student welfare.

However, this essential transitional phase also brings to light certain challenges that impact the efficiency of these endeavors. The different start and end times between schools complicate collaboration, making it difficult to synchronize efforts and share resources. This scheduling discrepancy not only hinders staff coordination but also affects vertical alignment meetings, which are crucial for maintaining continuity in educational objectives and strategies across grades.

For many students and their families, these transitions, although well-intentioned, can result in anxiety and stress. Despite the efforts to ease these shifts, the varied experiences of students indicate that transitions are still emotionally and educationally challenging.

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

Parents and guardians, especially those with children across all three elementary levels, often express concerns regarding the logistical difficulties posed by disparate schedules, which complicate daily routines such as drop-offs and pickups.

In response to these challenges, it is essential to explore strategies that can streamline the transition process and enhance collaboration between the schools involved. This may include aligning school schedules to facilitate easier transitions for families and enabling more frequent and effective vertical alignment meetings. By doing so, we can minimize the disruption to students' educational experiences and alleviate the concerns of their families.

Improving the transition experience in The Southborough Public Schools is not just about logistics and scheduling; it is about creating a cohesive, supportive environment that nurtures student growth and reduces anxiety. Through improved communication, collaboration, and coordination, we can ensure that every student feels prepared, supported, and confident as they progress through their elementary school journey.

Proposed:

Design Alternative 1: Grades 4 and 5

School	Grade Span	Alt. 1 Enrollment
Mary E. Finn Elementary School	PreK-1	260
Albert S. Woodward Memorial Elementary School	2-3	248
Margaret A. Neary Elementary School	4-5	305
P. Brent Trottier Middle School	6-8	409

The vision for Margaret A. Neary Elementary School encompasses a redesign to foster an educational environment where every space is purposefully crafted to support and enhance the learning journey.

There is a strong desire within our community for the construction of a school that preserves a close-knit atmosphere. This vision includes the implementation of learning neighborhoods. Such a structural and pedagogical arrangement supports a sense of community even in configurations with multiple grade levels. By embracing this model, we aim to enhance educational experiences in a way that is both innovative and deeply aligned with the values of the Southborough community. More details of the composition of the learning neighborhood follows.

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

Classroom design would prioritize flexibility, accommodating diverse groupings of students to support differentiated instruction and collaborative learning projects. Modern infrastructure would be a given, with classrooms outfitted to seamlessly incorporate technology into daily learning, ensuring that students are prepared for the digital age. Furthermore, small group rooms would be located between general education classrooms in each learning neighborhood, to support collaborative group work in break-out spaces and provision of specially designed instruction, academic intervention or extension lessons in close proximity to the classroom. Each learning neighborhood would include a learning commons that would serve as breakout space for differentiated learning and as a gathering space for larger groups of students and teachers. In the learning commons, flexible furniture and appropriate technology would support these goals.

Central to this vision is a library transformed into a modern media center, suited for fostering 21st-century media literacy skills. This space would become the heart of the school, a hub for innovation, learning, and discovery. The traditional library space would be enhanced with multiple learning areas including an adjoining STE classroom to support the specific digital literacy goals and science laboratory needs including sufficient storage for the computing devices, science tools and engineering materials. This space would be staffed by an instructional technology specialist and a library media specialist, both current members of the faculty. The art room would also be located adjacent to the media center and would be fully outfitted for technology infused art and digital literacy projects not only allowing for a STE inquiry focus but also providing for future flexibility in how spaces are used as educational demands and goals evolve. The art room would also be designed to meet the specific needs of the discipline with sufficient storage and space for creative endeavors.

In this design, music classrooms would be specifically planned to cater to their unique instructional needs, equipped with sufficient storage and spacious areas for students to freely explore. The gymnasium would be expansive, accommodating a comprehensive wellness program that nurtures students' physical education (PE), health education, and social emotional development. The gym would have a smaller space that can accommodate adaptive PE as well as yoga and dance.

Special education classrooms would be thoughtfully located in learning neighborhoods adjacent to general education classrooms, promoting inclusivity and allowing for a fluid transition between small-group instruction and mainstream classroom activities. These special education classrooms would include two substantially separate programs and learning centers for students on individualized education plans that require pull-out services. Adjacent to each substantially separate classroom would be a calming room that is available to all students in the learning neighborhoods. Related service providers (OT, PT, SLP) would benefit from designated spaces that ensure privacy and proximity to classroom activities, facilitating collaboration and accessibility. The school would feature dedicated areas for special education team meetings, assessments, and ensuring the highest quality continuum of services and appropriate levels of confidentiality.

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

The proposed Neary School would also include designated offices for the school psychologist, team chairperson, and behavior specialist as well as a small group room for meeting with students and a testing space for assessing students. Importantly, there would be a conference room dedicated to special education meetings.

The proposed design would also include an instructional suite to support literacy, math and English Language Development (ELD) instruction. The instructional suite would have offices for the reading and math specialists that could accommodate small group instruction or small professional planning sessions with educators. English Language Development (ELD) teachers would each have a dedicated space sufficient to function as an office and an instructional classroom space for providing Tier 1 English Language Development instruction which must be provided outside the general education classroom. However, placing this classroom in close proximity to the general education classes promotes the inclusive culture to which the community is committed. With increasing numbers of English Language Learners (ELLs) in our community, an ELD classroom would be located between every two learning neighborhoods, able to service two grade levels. By being in close proximity to the learning neighborhoods, we would achieve our goals of inclusivity.

The instructional suite would be adjacent to a teacher collaboration space for each learning neighborhood. Educators would benefit from dedicated spaces for grade-level planning, professional learning, data analysis, and professional collaboration, enhancing the quality of instruction through improved instructional practices as well as shared resources and strategies. Between learning neighborhoods, a staff lunchroom would also serve as a teacher preparation space and provide workstations for educational support professionals and itinerant employees who do not have dedicated offices or classrooms within the building.

The cafeteria would not only house a fully operational kitchen but also offer flexible and efficient dining arrangements, making meal times a more enjoyable and social experience for all students. Furthermore, the redesign of the Neary Office space would prioritize a welcoming atmosphere that underscores the importance of safety, security and confidentiality for the entire school community.

This reimagined Margaret A. Neary Elementary School would stand as a testament to the exceptional teaching and learning that occurs within its walls. Every aspect of the building's design would reflect a commitment to safety, inclusivity, wellness, and the highest standards of educational excellence, creating a nurturing and dynamic environment where students, faculty, and staff can thrive.

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

Design Alternative 2: Grades 3-5 at a Consolidated Margaret A. Neary Elementary School and Grade 2 at Woodward Elementary School

School	Grade Span	Alt. 2 Enrollment
Mary E. Finn Elementary School	PreK-1	260
Albert S. Woodward Memorial Elementary School	2	124
Margaret A. Neary Elementary School	3-5	429
P. Brent Trottier Middle School	6-8	409

*The proposed Neary school Design Alternative 2 matches the description for Design Alternative 1 scaled to accommodate three grade levels.

Reconfiguring the grade levels to encompass grades 3-5 at Margaret A. Neary Elementary School presents an opportunity to significantly enhance the educational journey for students. This adjustment promises a multitude of benefits stemming from a more stable and extended period at a single institution. Over the course of three years, students and their families have the opportunity to forge deeper and more meaningful relationships with faculty and staff, fostering a sense of belonging and community that is essential for a supportive learning environment.

This extended tenure at Neary would facilitate unparalleled collaboration among educators across the third, fourth, and fifth grades. Such collaboration is crucial for creating a cohesive and aligned educational experience, enabling teachers to build upon each other's work, share insights, and develop strategies that address the needs of all students more effectively. In turn, this unified approach can significantly enhance the consistency and quality of instruction that students receive.

Furthermore, a three-year span at Neary would allow for a more seamless continuum of services, particularly in areas such as special education. This stability is key for students requiring additional support, as it ensures they have sustained access to familiar resources and personnel dedicated to their success, minimizing disruptions and maximizing the effectiveness of individualized education programs.

The benefits of this grade-level configuration extend beyond the classroom. Neary educators, families and students have an additional year at the Neary school to build relationships and focus on teaching and learning.

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

A three-year grade configuration fosters greater curricular coherence. With educators working closely within the same school, there is a greater opportunity to align curricula, ensuring that learning objectives are met sequentially and systematically. This alignment supports a more integrated and comprehensive approach to education, laying a strong foundation for student learning and achievement.

With this proposed reconfiguration, students and families would still experience two school transitions during their time, once from grade 1 to 2 and another from grade 2 to 3. Students and families would experience the Albert S. Woodward Memorial Elementary School for one year as it would house Grade 2.

Design Alternative 3: Grades 2-5 at a Consolidated Margaret A. Neary Elementary School and Woodward Elementary School

Proposed:

School	Grade Span	Alt 3 Enrollment
Mary E. Finn Elementary School	0	0
Albert S. Woodward Memorial Elementary School	K-1	260
Margaret A. Neary Elementary School	2-5	610
P. Brent Trottier Middle School	6-8	409

*The proposed Neary school Design Alternative 3 matches the description for Design Alternative 1 scaled to accommodate four grade levels.

Reconfiguring the grade levels to encompass grades two-five at Margaret A. Neary Elementary School presents an opportunity to significantly enhance the educational journey for students. The benefits include an extended period at a single school and the ability to maximize resources at the Neary School. Over the course of four years, students and their families have the opportunity to forge deeper and more meaningful relationships with faculty and staff, fostering a sense of belonging and community that is essential for a supportive learning environment.

In this configuration, collaboration among educators would span across second, third, fourth, and fifth grades. Such collaboration is crucial for crafting a coherent and aligned educational experience, enabling teachers to build upon each other's work, share insights, and develop strategies that address the needs of all students more effectively. This is true in the arts, music,

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

physical education, library media, STE, and health classes, and all other academic subjects. There are also increased opportunities for sustained, embedded professional learning and collaboration. This alignment supports a more integrated and comprehensive approach to education, laying a strong foundation for student learning and achievement.

Furthermore, a four-year span at Neary would allow for a seamless continuum of services, particularly in areas such as special education and English Language Development. This stability is key for students requiring specially designed instruction, as it ensures they have access to familiar resources and personnel dedicated to their success, minimizing disruptions and maximizing the effectiveness of individualized education programs. Additionally, this configuration allows for cross-grade level groupings to support students with intensive special needs and for students to have more appropriate cohorts of peers with whom they work.

The benefits of this grade-level configuration extend beyond the classroom. In this configuration, students would transition once during their elementary school years. As a result, the time investment for transitioning students can be shifted to a focus on teaching and learning.

In summary, transitioning to a grades two-five configuration at Margaret A. Neary Elementary School offers a strategic approach to enriching the educational experience. It also achieves important goals of maximizing collaboration, achieving curriculum coherence, and reducing school transitions by one.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE CLASS SIZE POLICY

Current

The Public Schools of Southborough's [Class Size Policy](#) sets forth guidelines for determining class sizes for core courses in grades K-8, grounded in the school district's Core Values, Mission Statement, and Budget Priorities as established by the School Committee. It takes into account several criteria when deciding on class sizes, including class composition (which encompasses academics, behaviors, emotional support, language needs, and social aspects), class enrollments, educational philosophy, facility and financial constraints, and legal mandates.

The School Committee has recommended desirable class size ranges that vary by grade level: 16-20 students for grades K-2, 16-22 students for grades 3-5, and 18-22 students for grades 6-8, aiming to optimize the learning environment and educational outcomes.

The process for implementing these desirable class size ranges involves a yearly assessment during the budgetary process, where each school's principal, in collaboration with onsite staff, proposes staffing needs to the Superintendent in alignment with the Class Size Policy. Should class sizes exceed these desirable ranges due to various constraints or changes in student numbers, a thorough review process is initiated. This involves gathering input from teachers and administrators to make informed decisions on how to best support the affected classes, possibly including recommendations for additional resources or support. Moreover, should unforeseen conditions arise during the school year that impact the policy's implementation, principals are

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

tasked with developing action plans, in consultation with teaching staff, to address these challenges, thereby ensuring that class sizes remain conducive to effective teaching and learning.

Proposed

Regardless of the preferred option, there is not a planned change to the District's Class Size Policy. The District is committed to fostering an inclusive educational setting, as emphasized in its Class Size Policy. Adhering to the policy is essential to accommodate the varied learning profiles present within each classroom, enabling educators to effectively engage and educate every student. Recognizing the legal and ethical mandate for placing students in the least restrictive environment possible, our classrooms have become increasingly diverse. This diversity underscores the importance of smaller class sizes, which are pivotal in allowing teachers to craft and deliver lessons that cater to the unique needs of each student, thereby maximizing their potential. The community is committed to maintaining small class sizes so we will design to remain consistent with the District's policy language, 16-20 students for grades K-2, 16-22 students for grades 3-5, and 18-22 students for grades 6-8.

SCHOOL SCHEDULING METHODS

Current

The process of crafting elementary school schedules is a thoughtful and dynamic exercise, undertaken annually with a commitment to continuous improvement and alignment with the District's educational priorities and District time on learning guidelines. District administrators and school leaders convene in collaborative sessions to ensure that the scheduling framework not only reflects the overarching goals and guiding principles of the District's educational mission but also optimizes the learning experience for every student. This partnership extends to include a dedicated committee of teachers, allowing for a broad spectrum of insights and expertise to guide decision-making, ensuring that the schedules are crafted with a keen awareness of both student needs and educational standards.

Elementary Time on Learning Guidelines

Content Area (K-2)	Minutes each Day (Minimum)	Notes
ELA (Reading and Writing)	120	<i>Integrating Science and History/Social Science, Digital Literacy and Computer Science (DLCS), Social Emotional Learning (SEL)</i>
Mathematics	75	
Science or History/Social Science	45 mins, 3 days per week	<i>Integrating Reading and Writing, DLCS, SEL</i>
Specials/World Language	45 - 60	
Lunch/Recess	Up to 50	

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

Snack/ Stretch	Up to 10	
Morning Meeting	30	
	375	

Content Area (Gr. 3-5)	Minutes Per Day (Minimum)	Notes
ELA (Reading and Writing)	120	<i>Integrating Science and History/Social Science, Digital Literacy and Computer Science (DLCS), Social Emotional Learning (SEL)</i>
Mathematics	75	
Science or History/Social Science	45 mins, 3 days per week	<i>Integrating Reading and Writing, DLCS, SEL</i>
Specials/ World Language	45 - 60	
Lunch/Recess	Up to 50	
Snack/ Stretch	Up to 10	
Morning Meeting	30	
	375	

As the student experience is designed, it is done with the understanding of the pace of learning, the importance of balance, and the necessity of providing an environment conducive to social emotional and academic growth. The structured student day is designed to maximize engagement, foster educational exploration, and support the well-being of every learner.

In addition, scheduling endeavors to maximize time for grade-level educators' common planning, data teams, and cross-grade level educator collaboration. Currently, with the varying start and end times, cross-grade collaboration between schools happens infrequently.

The scheduling process within each school adopts a collaborative team-based methodology, emphasizing the strategic timing of grade-level specials to coincide across each grade level. This alignment is designed to provide teachers the opportunity for weekly common planning time, facilitating cross-curricular planning initiatives and enabling a consistent and collective review of data. The approach enhances the coordination and quality of instruction and creates a more unified and integrated educational experience for students. Furthermore, this scheduling strategy benefits service providers by creating dedicated time slots to engage with specific grade levels for specific disciplines as required, ensuring that the needs of all students are met more efficiently and effectively. Through this approach to scheduling, schools are able to optimize instructional support and foster a more cohesive learning environment.

For the successful inclusion of subjects like art, music, physical education, library, and world language classes within the new scheduling framework, the specific design alternative chosen will directly influence the number of dedicated teaching spaces required, as noted in each of the subsections below. This provision is essential to support the scheduling of Specials, guaranteeing that each discipline benefits from an environment designed to meet its distinct

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

instructional demands. The decision on the precise number of teaching stations necessary will be based on the design alternative selected, showcasing the District's commitment to offering a balanced and enriched educational experience for students through thoughtfully designed and equipped spaces.

Neary Master Schedule

	Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday	
	Fourth	Fifth	Fourth	Fifth	Fourth	Fifth	Fourth	Fifth	Fourth	Fifth
8:50 – 9:35		Art - Dolan PE - Schwepp Music - Soldo Lib/IT - Finnegan	Art - Grenier	PE - Turieo. Lib/IT - Wallack	Art - Theve PE - Finnegan Lib/IT - Ahearn	Music - Collins	Music - Grenier	Lib/IT - Turieo. PE - Wallack	Music - Ahearn PE - Finnegan Lib/IT - Theve	
9:35 – 10:20		Art - Schwepp PE - Dolan Music - Finnegan Lib/IT - Soldo	PLC Grade 5/SEL led by Grade 4 and Stretch		Lib/IT - Head	Music - Dolan PE - Schwepp	PLC Grade 4/SEL led by Grade 5 and Stretch		Lib/IT - Head	Music - Schwepp PE - Dolan
10:20 – 10:30										
10:30-11:15		Art - Wallack Lib/IT - Turieo		Art - Soldo PE - Finnegan Lib/IT - Schwepp	Lib/IT - Grenier PE - Fisher	Art - Turieo. Music - Wallack	Music - Head	Lib/IT - Schwepp PE - Collins	Lib/IT - Fisher	Music - Turieo PE - Wallack
11:15-12:00			Art - Finnegan Lib/IT - Theve PE - Ahearn		Lib/IT - Fisher. PE - Grenier Art - Gardula		Music - Gardula	PE - Finnegan Lib/IT - Soldo	Lib/IT - Grenier	
12:00-12:45 Grade 4 Lunch			Fourth Grade Art Studio			Lib/IT - Wallack PE - Turieo				PE - Soldo Lib/IT - Finnegan
12:45-1:30 Grade 5 lunch	Art - Fisher PE - Grenier Lib/IT - Gardula		PE - Fisher			Fifth Grade Art Studio	Music - Theve Lib/IT - Finnegan PE - Gardula			
1:30-2:15	Lib/IT - Finnegan PE - Theve. Art - Ahearn		PE - Head	Lib/IT - Dolan		Art - Finnegan PE - Soldo	Music - Finnegan PE - Theve Lib/IT - Ahearn		Lib/IT - Gardula	PE - Collins
2:15-3:00	PE - Head	Lib/IT - Collins	Art - Head PE - Gardula	Lib/IT - Collins		Art - Collins	Music - Fisher PE - Ahearn	Lib/IT - Dolan		Band/Orchestra

Woodward Master Schedule

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

Albert S. Woodward School Master Schedule					
Time:	2023-2024				
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:55 - 9:25		Grade 2 Enrichment	Grade 3 Enrichment		9:00 ~ CARE Block
9:30 - 10:15	Art: McClean Lib Media: Farrar PE: Serra	Art: Farrar Lib Media: Kelleher PE: McClean	Art: Serra Lib Media: McClean PE: Farrar	Lib Media: Serra Music: McClean PE: Farrar	Lib Media: Coyle PE: McClean Music: Farrar
10:15 - 11:00	Art: Kelleher Lib Media: Farrar PE: Coyle Strings: Lehane	Art: Coyle Lib Media: Kelleher PE: Serra Strings: McClean/Lehane	Lib Media: McClean PE: Kelleher Music: Coyle	Lib Media: Serra Music: Kelleher PE: Coyle	Lib Media: Coyle PE: Kelleher Music: Serra
11:00 - 11:45	Art: Lehane PE: Robison Music:	Art: Robison Lib Media: Lehane PE: Henebury Music:	Lib Media: Henebury PE: Robison Music: Lehane	Lib Media: Robison PE: Lehane Music:	Music: Robison PE: Lehane
11:45 - 12:30	Art: Henebury Strings: Kelly	Lib Media: Lehane Strings: Kelly	Lib Media: Henebury	Music: Henebury	PE: Henebury Lib Media: Kelly
Grade 2 Lunch 11:45					
Grade 3 Lunch 12:30					
12:45 - 1:30	Lib Media: Black PE: Guccione	Art: Black	Music: Black PE: Guccione	PE: Black Lib Media: Robison	Music: Guccione
1:30 - 2:15	Art: Duchane Lib Media: Black PE: Foy Strings: McClean	Art: Foy Lib Media: Duchane Strings: Henebury	Lib Media: Foy PE: Duchane Strings: Henebury	Lib Media: Guccione Music: Duchane PE: Foy	Lib Media: Kelly PE: Black Music: Foy
2:15 - 3:00	Art: Kelly Strings: Kelleher	Art: Guccione Lib Media: Duchane Music: Kelly	Lib Media: Foy PE: Kelly Strings: Kelleher	PE: Kelly Lib Media: Guccione Strings: Duchane	PE: Duchane
3:00 - 3:10					

The current scheduling model for supporting students with special needs at Neary and Woodward involves collaboration among classroom teachers and special educators, and the plans for the new Neary School are designed to continue this approach. Emphasizing an inclusive philosophy, the majority of academic support and interventions are scheduled to be integrated within the classroom setting to ensure all students' needs are met in a least restrictive environment. For students requiring a quieter space for concentration or multilingual learners in need of specialized language instruction, additional support outside the classroom is scheduled. Consequently, the new Neary design would include smaller, strategically placed learning spaces within each learning neighborhood for focused and targeted instruction. These spaces would be intentionally located near general education classrooms to optimize learning time for all students, and best support students' schedules.

Additionally, the District acknowledges that the educational landscape of tomorrow may diverge significantly from today's practices. Therefore, it is imperative to prioritize a facility design for forthcoming schools that can adapt to these evolving requirements. An illustrative focus lies in fostering an environment conducive to nurturing students' capacities in digital literacy, communication, and collaboration. Consequently, the District commits to revisiting scheduling procedures and time allocations, ensuring ample opportunities for students to engage in STE

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

Learning Labs and dynamic, adaptable spaces. These spaces will empower students to intricately plan, execute, and articulate their learning experiences through flexible configurations tailored to their needs.

Proposed

There are no proposed changes to the Time on Learning expectations or the approach to student and educator schedules. However, the District continues to support educators in collaborating across disciplines for integration across subjects. This is a crucial component of the District's approach to scheduling and professional planning in order to meet the time on learning guidelines and addressing the full array of standards while also provided a well-rounded experience that includes world language and the fine and performing arts. For example, the integration of digital literacy and computer science standards into core subjects may mean that the work that an instructional technology specialists is leading in the STE Lab is co-designed with a general education teacher and addresses social studies standards as well.

Design Alternatives 2 and 3 would impact the start and end time of the school day.

Design Alternative 1: Grades 4-5 at Margaret A. Neary Elementary Elementary School

School	Start Time	School End Time
Finn	9:10 AM	3:25 PM
Woodward	8:55 AM	3:10 PM
Neary	8:45 AM	3:00 PM

Design Alternative 2: Grades 3-5 at a Consolidated Margaret A. Neary Elementary School

School	Start Time	School End Time
Finn	9:10 AM	3:25 PM
Woodward	8:55 AM	3:10 PM
Neary	8:45 AM	3:00 PM

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

Design Alternative 3: Grades 2-5 at a Consolidated Margaret A. Neary Elementary School

School	Start Time	School End Time
Woodward (PK-1)	9:10 AM	3:25 PM
Neary (2-5)	8:45 AM	3:00 PM

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Administrative and Academic Organization

Current

At the Margaret A. Neary Elementary School, educators are on grade-level teams, each composed of six to eight teachers responsible for teaching core subjects such as math, science, social studies, and English Language Arts (ELA). However, the building does not support logical groupings of grade level classrooms by teams. The school operates under the guidance of a full-time principal who oversees both the teaching and the academic support staff.

Proposed

	Current	Design Alt 1 (4-5)	Design Alt 2 (3-5)	Design Alt 3 (2-5)
Learning Neighborhoods	0	2	3	4
Administrative Structure	1 principal	1 principal	1 principal 1 AP	1 principal 1 AP

A redesign of the Margaret A. Neary Elementary School would include the introduction of learning neighborhoods to support interconnected learning communities within the school. Each learning neighborhood would have a learning commons equipped with technology and flexible furniture to support small group breakout sessions, collaborative projects, and independent work at times. In addition, small group rooms will be located between general education classrooms to provide a quiet, distraction-free setting for targeted instruction for small groups, collaboration among peers or pull-out services close to the general education setting. Learning centers and substantially separate special education rooms would also be located in the learning neighborhoods to promote a more inclusive environment. These learning neighborhoods would support collaboration, relationship building, and flexible grouping across classrooms. This strategy is aimed at breaking down the barriers presented by the traditional school layout, paving the way for a more inclusive, dynamic, and collaborative educational setting that enriches the learning experience for all students.

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

In Design Alternatives 2 and 3, the principal would be supported by an assistant principal in leading the school.

Curriculum and Instructional Practices

Overview, Mathematics, English Language Arts/Literacy, Social Studies, Science, Technology, and Engineering, World Languages, Digital Literacy, Computer Science and Instructional Technology, Library Media Science, Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Physical Education and Wellness

Current

The District collaborates closely with educators to design lessons, assessments, and learning environments grounded in the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), ensuring accessibility for all students. This comprehensive framework focuses on setting rigorous goals for all students and designing learning experiences with flexible means for learners to achieve these goals. Educators plan in ways that reduce students' barriers to engaging in learning, recognizing and comprehending knowledge, and demonstrating their understanding and skills.

The existing infrastructure at Neary School, however, limits the flexibility of teaching methods due to its traditional design, which does not accommodate modern educational models emphasizing hands-on projects, group work, and student-driven learning choices.

Proposed

The District will continue to support educators in using the UDL framework to provide inclusive and engaging learning experiences that help students develop into expert learners who exercise agency and increase independence over time. In pursuit of full accessibility, classrooms should be designed with voice amplification systems to support all learners.

In addition, the District is continuing to support the adoption of new high-quality instructional materials in ELA, a multi-year implementation process that involves ongoing professional learning, and preparing to adopt new instructional materials in mathematics in 2025. In addition, the District is planning to update instructional methods in the area of science to align with the state frameworks and a national focus on phenomenon-based science inquiry. The design implications of these curriculum and instruction foci are detailed by discipline below.

Mathematics:

Current

Elementary mathematics education emphasizes providing students with enriching experiences in grade-level math, connecting content standards to mathematical practices. The District's approach to elementary math instruction, delivered by grade-level teachers in general education classrooms for 75 minutes daily, is designed to be inviting and engaging. Students are actively encouraged to engage in mathematical discourse with both their teachers and peers, fostering collaboration, problem-solving skills, and mutual learning. Teachers cultivate an environment that nurtures student confidence and independence, enabling them to become adept

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

problem-solvers who can work collaboratively. Educators work with students as a whole class, in small groups and provide opportunities for individual work time. On a daily basis, students interact with a supplemental, adaptive technology on a Chromebook that supports their individual journey to develop conceptual understanding and procedural fluency with math concepts while engaging in productive struggle with challenging puzzles. It is currently challenging to accommodate the different configurations called for by the District's math program in the Neary classrooms.

Proposed

The requirements of an elementary mathematics classroom are diverse, with a wide array of activities occurring throughout the day, week, and month. An adaptable space that provides flexibility for mathematics learning is essential. This includes a large gathering area where students can congregate without desks or chairs to engage in classroom routines like counting exercises, number talks, and strategy sharing. Ideally, this area should be situated near a screen for projecting student work, problems to consider, videos, or other visuals to facilitate mathematical discussions.

There should also be ample space for teachers to work with small groups of students, while other groups engage in activities throughout the room. These groups may utilize manipulatives and vertical whiteboards for problem-solving. Technology should be readily available for explaining concepts, practicing skills, or displaying student work. The classroom space should also support independent work which might involve students working at individual work stations, collaborating at tables, on rugs or floor spaces, standing at counters or working in the learning commons with peers or another educator, such as a math specialist or an educational support professional (ESP) supporting intervention or extension of learning. Some students will choose a distraction-free space in the classroom or a small group room to support their ability to access the learning with a math specialist, a special educator, or an ESP.

English Language Arts/Literacy

Current

Elementary educators use the comprehensive Great Minds' *Wit & Wisdom* core curriculum to deliver ELA instruction. This curriculum provides a robust framework for teaching literacy skills and engaging students in meaningful reading, writing, and oral language experiences.

To ensure a strong foundation in literacy, teachers integrate various instructional approaches and resources. Foundational skills development is supported by programs such as *Project Read Phonics*, *Haggerty Phonemic Awareness*, and *Phonics and Spelling Through Phoneme-Grapheme Mapping*. These resources offer systematic and explicit instruction to help students master essential phonics and spelling concepts.

In the delivery of literacy instruction, teachers employ a diverse range of strategies to cater to the needs of all learners. Whole-class instruction allows for the exploration of complex texts and the introduction of new concepts, fostering shared experiences and discussions among

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

students. Small group activities provide opportunities for targeted instruction and differentiated support, allowing educators to address individual learning needs more effectively. Additionally, independent work time encourages students to apply their skills and creativity in reading and writing tasks, promoting autonomy and self-expression.

Teachers may lead whole-class lessons with students seated at desks and chairs, providing structured guidance and direct instruction. Alternatively, teachers may facilitate small group discussions or activities with students gathered on the floor in circles or groups, promoting collaboration and peer interaction. This flexible approach to classroom organization enables educators to adapt their teaching methods to suit the specific objectives of each lesson and the learning preferences of their students.

Overall, the implementation of the *Wit & Wisdom* curriculum alongside targeted foundational skills instruction creates a rich and engaging learning environment for students, fostering their development as proficient readers, writers, and communicators.

Proposed

The District will continue to support educators in implementing the *Wit & Wisdom* curriculum as well as the foundational skills programs currently in use. The District will also seek to create more interdisciplinary lessons where literacy themes overlap with science and social studies topics.

Literacy instruction requires a classroom that is designed to foster a productive learning environment, where teachers serve as facilitators and students develop the essential skills needed for success in secondary school and ultimately the workplace. In addition to traditional classroom spaces, small breakout rooms adjacent to general education classrooms will support differentiation of learning with support from reading specialists, special educators and ESPs. This type of targeted instruction or peer collaboration will also happen in the learning commons and may draw students from multiple general education classrooms.

Flexibility within the classroom layout is paramount to enhance student productivity and foster collaboration and communication. Key design elements include:

- A literacy-rich environment characterized by a diverse array of books spanning various levels and genres. Bookshelves should be accessible at an age-appropriate height, creating an inviting atmosphere conducive to reading.
- Ample wall space for displaying anchor charts, comfortable seating arrangements, abundant natural light, and inviting baskets filled with high-quality literature.
- Provision of audiobooks and headphones to accommodate diverse learning preferences and abilities.
- Access to books in multiple languages to reflect the cultural diversity of the classroom, ensuring that all students feel represented in the reading materials.
- Inclusion of titles that showcase diverse cultures and neurodiversity, allowing children to see themselves reflected in the stories they read.

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

- Dedicated space for dramatic interpretations of literature and drama, featuring a stage, microphone, recording technology, and seating for an audience. Dramatization of literature may take place in the classroom or in the learning commons for larger audiences or cross-class groups.
- An adaptable classroom layout that can be easily reconfigured to accommodate different learning activities and group dynamics, facilitating personalized and collaborative learning experiences.

The classroom will incorporate diverse seating options to promote collaboration when students work in small groups or pairs. This includes high tables, low tables, round and square tables, as well as flexible seating choices such as large pillows, couches, bean bags, stools, and tables.

Other essential features encompass a designated space for mini-lessons, read-aloud, and group discussions, complete with a rug and comfortable seating. A small teacher work area with a kidney-shaped table serves multiple purposes for collaborating with students and having supplies readily available. Additionally, reading, writing, and general materials are stored in an easily accessible area, along with access to technology to support instruction and research purposes.

Social Studies

Current

The social studies curriculum is designed to encompass civic knowledge, dispositions, and skills, reflecting the diverse range of disciplinary skills. The curriculum is aligned with Content Standards and Literacy Standards for history and social science, and emphasizes seven practices essential for inquiry and research. The District curriculum strives to empower students to navigate democracy's potential and challenges effectively. Moreover, it prepares them to engage in societies with demographic and cultural diversity. Teachers have developed interdisciplinary units that integrate literacy and social studies standards. Students are developing their reading, writing, listening and speaking, research skills while learning history content. Students are also often engaged with primary sources which may include texts, art, and photographs. When students are working in small groups on projects you will often see some students in the hallways working on the floor or at makeshift work stations.

In addition, teachers currently seek opportunities to integrate Digital Literacy and Computer Science Standards into their science curriculum units.

Proposed

Central to the new design is the provisioning of spaces that are rich with information, imagery, and artifacts relevant to social studies concepts. This approach aims to immerse students in environments where learning materials deepen their understanding and connection to the subject matter. This will be accomplished both in the classroom and in the media center.

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

The ideal classroom layout emphasizes flexibility and adaptability, incorporating a variety of work spaces and seating arrangements to facilitate student collaboration. High tables, low tables, round, and square tables are considered essential to accommodate diverse learning and teaching styles, promoting active engagement and interaction among students.

A dedicated area within the classroom will serve as a resource hub, allowing students easy access to materials essential for exploration and learning. The strategic use of wall space for displaying timelines, maps, and charts is highlighted as a method to integrate social studies into daily classroom dialogues, fostering cross-curricular connections. Bookshelves, thoughtfully placed at student-friendly heights, will house a broad range of resources, from historical documents to multimedia, catering to varied reading levels and interests.

Furthermore, the integration of technology is essential to the history curriculum. Accessible technology will not only support instruction and enhance digital literacy but also open doors for students to engage in virtual explorations, craft their timelines, and pursue social studies-related interests in innovative ways.

Teachers will continue to provide opportunities for interdisciplinary study and project based learning. This will continue to include opportunities for the inclusion of Digital Literacy and Computer Science Standards in the social studies lessons. At times this involves robots and other computing devices that are shared across classrooms and use of the learning commons will be a key option to support this. Options to break out into small group rooms between general education classrooms or working in the learning commons where flexible furniture and appropriate technology will support effective learning. The learning commons and breakout rooms will also allow teachers to flexible group students across general education classrooms.

In summary, The Public Schools of Southborough's vision for social studies classrooms marries traditional learning tools with modern technology and flexible design principles.

Science, Technology, and Engineering

Current

Elementary teachers foster engagement in science and technology/engineering (STE) education among their students using Carolina Science curriculum *Engineering is Elementary* (EIE) units developed by the Boston Museum of Science. These units provide STE curriculum that encompasses hands-on activities, investigations, and design challenges, which ignite students' curiosity and cultivate their analytical skills for scientific inquiry. They actively promote student involvement in learning, aiming to instill a growth mindset that empowers students to take ownership of their learning and excel in STE subjects.

In their teaching, elementary teachers prioritize relevance, ensuring that STE education is meaningful and applicable to students' lives. They emphasize the practical application of knowledge and skills to real-world situations, equipping students with the analytical thinking and problem-solving abilities necessary for success in today's world. Additionally, they strive to

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

support high levels of achievement for all students, including females, racially and ethnically diverse populations and those with varied learning needs, to create an inclusive learning environment. In addition, teachers currently seek opportunities to integrate Digital Literacy and Computer Science (DLCS) standards into their science curriculum units.

Through purposeful integration of science and engineering practices with core concepts, elementary teachers ensure that students develop increasingly sophisticated skills and are equipped to apply scientific reasoning effectively across various contexts and situations, laying a strong foundation for their future success.

Currently, general education teachers make do with a typical general education classroom as the space where students conduct science and engineering experiments. The instructional technology specialist teaches specific DLCS skills in the general education classroom and brings materials with her for each lesson, moving around the building. In addition, the instructional technology specialist and library media specialist teach DLCS enriched lessons in the library which is not currently properly provisioned for these high-tech activities.

Proposed

Space Summary	Current	Design Alt 1 (4-5)	Design Alt 2 (3-5)	Design Alt 3 (2-5)
Science Technology and Engineering (STE) Learning Lab	0	1	1	1

The new design would provide adequate space to facilitate experiments and inquiry work within the science, technology, and engineering (STE) curriculum. The design would provide a flexible STE Learning Lab that accommodates various learning activities. General education teachers are responsible for teaching science and engineering lessons, and they would be able to take their students to the STE Learning Lab for hands-on experiments and design projects.

In addition, teachers will continue to integrate Digital Literacy and Computer Science (DLCS) Standards in many disciplines which may involve robots and other computing devices that are shared across classrooms. This could take place in the STE Learning Lab and might involve co-teaching with the instructional technology specialist who has specialized skills in this area and would oversee the STE Learning Lab and this room would be their home-base. In addition, the instructional technology specialists and the library media specialist each teach some of the DLCS standards and technology skills during designated times in the schedule and would do this in the STE Learning Lab and media center. It will be important for the STE Learning Lab to be adjacent to the media center to support this integration of content.

Key design components for the STE Learning Lab include:

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

- Provision of water in multiple locations, with at least one deep/work sink to facilitate cleaning and activities such as density investigations.
- The safe availability of electricity at each workstation is crucial for activities involving digital technology.
- Inclusion of large, deep cabinetry units to store STE investigations and large-scale models, along with ample counter space for project setups.
- Adequate room size to allow flexible workstation configurations and whole-group instruction areas, furnished with light-blocking shades for activities involving light and waves.
- Furniture featuring adjustable height tables on wheels and stools promoting core strength, facilitating multiple student group configurations.
- Easy access to outdoor environments and open-air meeting spaces, fostering connections with nature and real-world learning experiences.

The District aims to incorporate STE Learning Labs to enhance teaching and integration of DLCS standards as well as science, technology, engineering with goals to develop critical thinking skills, create coherent learning experiences, and deepen connections to core values of engagement, equity, and wellness.

To the extent possible, learning commons in learning neighborhoods should provide many of the same design features listed below to ensure STE-related learning activities can happen anywhere including classrooms, within extended learning spaces, and in the STE Learning Labs. This would allow multiple classes to engage in this type of learning at the same time throughout the building and not vie for usage of the STE Learning Lab as the only location suitable for STE enriched activities.

The District plans to integrate numerous "green building" features into the improved facility to enhance efficiency and sustainability, intending to label and identify these features as real-world applications of science, technology, and engineering for student understanding.

World Languages

Current

The Public Schools of Southborough provides students in kindergarten and grade one with Spanish classes twice a week for 30 minutes each. The Spanish program provides students the opportunity to learn about others' cultures and develop proficiency in a language other than English at a developmentally critical time. Currently, there is not a dedicated classroom and the educator teaches within each teacher's classroom. This limits the teacher's ability to create a language-rich environment for the students. Spanish classes will be added to second and third grade in 2024-2025 at 60 - 90 minutes per week and to fourth and fifth grade in 2025-2026 for 90 minutes per week.

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

Proposed

Space Summary	Current	Design Alt 1 (4-5)	Design Alt 2 (3-5)	Design Alt 3 (2-5)
World Language Classroom	0	1	2	2

The new design will include a dedicated world language classroom to improve language skills through a language-rich environment that supports small group and whole group lessons as well as individual work space. The language classroom will support students learning and improving their proficiency in Spanish language and have augmented acoustics. The language classroom will have technology, books, and a variety of Spanish language resources that engage students in interactive activities, enhancing their Spanish listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. The language classroom will be an adaptable classroom layout that can be easily reconfigured to accommodate different learning activities and dynamic group activities including art projects, singing, and dancing to learn about world cultures.

Digital Literacy, Computer Science and Instructional Technology

Current

The Public Schools of Southborough is committed to a 21st century education that is enriched by technology across disciplines. The District has a one-to-one device program that provides all students access to a Chromebook and teachers rely heavily on projection systems, document cameras and augmented acoustics in all disciplines. The Instructional Technology Specialist (ITS) assists teachers in infusing DLCS standards into lessons across disciplines. The ITS also staff's the STE Lab where they will provide direct instruction to students and can support teachers who use the resources available. In addition, the ITS teaches students directly in collaboration with the library media specialist and by pushing into general education classrooms because there is not a dedicated location for this instruction. By having the STE Lab adjacent to the Media Center, this collaboration can be seamless.

Proposed

The vision for a future Neary Elementary School assumes seamless integration of technology throughout the building. The goal is for educators and students to be able to move throughout the building and use projection systems, wifi systems and other technology systems with ease.

Further details about DLCS and technology instruction are detailed in other subjects especially the science, technology and engineering section and the Library Media Sciences section of the academic program descriptions.

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

Library Media Sciences

Current:

The library at Neary is a pivotal component of students' education. Students visit the library at least twice per week for a curriculum that includes traditional library standards, DLCS standards and a commitment to teaching inquiry skills. The Neary Elementary School has a traditional library which is inadequate in several respects. The space has insufficient lighting and airflow and was not designed for the infusion of digital literacy and computer science in the library curriculum. The library media specialist and the instructional technology specialist often collaborate in this space. In addition, the library is often used for meetings but does not have sufficient seating or an appropriate set-up to comfortably and effectively accommodate staff meetings. Professional development is occasionally held in the library but it is only appropriate for small group professional learning due to the configuration of the space and the limited projection system available despite having significant square footage in the library.

Proposed:

In the digital age, where information is ubiquitous and learning extends beyond traditional classroom walls, the Media Center's role within the educational landscape of The Public Schools of Southborough is pivotal. This evolution reflects the District's broader educational vision, where information literacy becomes a cornerstone, equipping students not just with the ability to gather information but also to critically assess and utilize it effectively across various domains. This approach aligns with the District's commitment to wellness and the holistic development of students, integrating digital citizenship, media literacy, and a love for lifelong learning.

The District's vision for the new school's Media Center transcends traditional boundaries, aspiring to be a dynamic hub that supports the Digital Literacy and Computer Science (DLCS) Standards alongside the AASL/MSLA frameworks. It aims to cultivate an environment where exploratory learning, critical digital literacy, and media literacy skills are not just encouraged but are integral to the student experience. The Media Center will be a hub of creativity and innovation, offering a vast, flexible, and area designed for multifunctional use. The space will also celebrate literature, fostering a lifelong love of reading through engaging read-aloud sessions and literature-based lessons connected to the ELA, Social Studies, and Science Massachusetts State Frameworks. The media center will be alongside a STE Learning Lab that enables students to engage in hands-on activities, integrating content areas and applying technology creatively to solve complex problems. The STE Learning Lab would be supervised by the Instructional Technology Specialist while the media center would be supervised by the library media specialist. These professionals regularly collaborate in the current configuration.

To meet the needs of a diverse student population and reflect society's rich cultural diversity, the Media Center must:

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

- Provide a welcoming common area with access to digital devices and flexible seating, allowing students to explore, research, communicate, and collaborate effectively.
- Feature a collection of materials that mirrors a diverse society, supporting inclusive learning experiences.
- Accommodate flexible learning spaces for individual and group instruction.
- Technology will be seamlessly infused, with mobile devices distributed throughout the building to foster a community where information access, collaboration, and independent work are supported.

This envisioned Media Center will be a cornerstone for academic and personal growth.

Visual Arts Programs

Space Summary	Current	Design Alt 1 (4-5)	Design Alt 2 (3-5)	Design Alt 3 (2-5)
Art	1	1	1	2

Current

At the elementary level, students are engaged in exploring their creativity in visual arts across a diverse range of projects. These projects span various media, including drawing, painting, sculpture, ceramics, textiles, digital art, and interdisciplinary endeavors that weave together elements of STE, humanities, and performing arts. The curriculum prioritizes the development of specific artistic skills while placing a strong emphasis on cultivating lifelong learning skills such as creative problem-solving, observation, teamwork, and exploratory play. The current art room at Neary is a general education classroom that has been converted to an art room and therefore lacks storage and sufficient work space.

Proposed

To realize this educational vision, the visual arts classroom must be a dynamic space that could be used for different teaching methodologies and artistic media. Essential features of this classroom include:

- A spacious, open area with a rug for whole-class discussions and activities.
- Sizable tables with stools to support both collaborative and solo artistic endeavors.
- A suite of equipment including a whiteboard, ceiling-mounted projector, document camera, projection screen, bulletin boards, drying racks, and readily available laptops and tablets.
- Ample storage to keep art materials and student projects organized, including an art workroom with storage and a kiln.
- Provisions for STEAM integration would be facilitated by locating the art room near the media center and STE Learning Lab.

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

- Equipped with technology resources to support inquiry and the engineering design process.
- Spaces that facilitate an integration of visual and performing arts throughout the curriculum, the school should feature a dedicated, versatile space—distinct from the cafeteria or gymnasium—for showcasing visual arts, hosting intimate performances, and presenting student projects.

Performing Arts Programs

	Current	Design Alt 1 (4-5)	Design Alt 2 (3-5)	Design Alt 3 (2-5)
Performing Arts (Music)	2	2 (Includes larger performance area)	3 (including 1 large performance area)	3 (including 1 large performance area)

Current

Music education is offered to all students, with classes that enrich the traditional ensemble experiences of chorus, band, and orchestra. The music curriculum offers opportunities for ensemble singing, instrument playing, physical movement, dramatic expression, music reading and writing, analytical listening, and composition.

Students engage in general music education classes once per week. In addition, students in grade three participate in weekly small group instrumental lessons. In grades four and five, many students participate in ensembles, including band, orchestra, and chorus, with instruction encompassing both large-group and small-group instrumental lessons. The band experiences include Blues Band, Beginners Band, and 5th Grade Band as well as full band rehearsals. Between band, orchestra and chorus, there is currently a music ensemble practicing every day either before or after school at Neary. This comprehensive approach not only nurtures musical skills but also enriches the students' cultural and emotional development.

Current levels of participation in music beyond general music class		
Music Activity	Third grade (currently at Woodward)	Fourth and fifth grade (currently at Neary)
Chorus		72
Instrumental lessons	67 students	38 small groups for band 23 small groups for orchestra
Band (rehearse in various configurations)		145

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

Orchestra (rehearse both grades together)		65
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The current music rooms at Neary have significant limitations and are in constant use throughout the school days as well as before and after school. One of the music rooms is not ADA accessible due to stairs at the entrance. In addition, there is insufficient storage and therefore musical instruments are often in hallways or the edges of general education classrooms during the school day. There is no performance area so all community music events are hosted at Trottier Middle School.

Proposed

The design would include spaces that are tailor-made for music education, featuring:

- A spacious, adaptable area that is carpeted, with ceilings higher than standard to facilitate a range of activities, including classroom learning, music practice, choral singing, performances for parents and the community, and instrumental instruction. Such a space benefits from extensive acoustic treatments to enhance sound quality and ensure a versatile environment for various musical pursuits.
- Incorporating acoustical enhancements is crucial for protecting students' hearing and enhancing the effectiveness of curriculum delivery. These features are key to creating a conducive learning environment that prioritizes student safety and educational quality.
- A sufficiently large performance area that can accommodate ensemble rehearsals and enable the hosting of both formal and informal concerts, providing students with essential experiences in performance and audience engagement.
- Dedicated spaces for small group lessons, particularly for band and orchestra students, allowing for focused instruction and practice that is critical for developing instrumental skills.
- A designated space for instrument storage.

Wellness - Physical Education And Health

	Current	Design Alt 1 (4-5)	Design Alt 2 (3-5)	Design Alt 3 (2-5)
Physical Education (Gymnasium)	2	1	1	1
Adaptive PE/Yoga	0	1	1	1
Health Classroom	0	1	1	2

Current

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

The Public Schools of Southborough prioritize wellness, reflecting this commitment through the District's values. The Wellness Curriculum encompasses health, physical education, social emotional learning, and overall personal wellness, aiming to cultivate physical competencies and enhance fitness among students. The Public Schools of Southborough integrates health education across classroom teaching, nursing, counseling, and physical education. Collaboratively, educators and health professionals develop activities that promote physical, social and emotional health and well-being.

Physical education is a staple of the curriculum for all students from kindergarten through eighth grade. Students in grades K-5 enjoy a 45-minute session twice per week. Physical education takes place in versatile settings, including gymnasiums and outdoor areas such as fields and blacktops.

The school's playground includes play structures, a blacktop area with play lines, and fields. Recess is a dynamic outdoor time for students, utilizing fields, swings, blacktop areas, playgrounds, and nature play spaces. It's also a time for relaxation and nature observation, underscoring the District's holistic approach to wellness and outdoor learning.

Proposed

In the future design, spaces support all aspects of the Wellness Curriculum. To support physical education, the gymnasium will offer a safe environment for both students and spectators. To embody the district's dedication to wellness, the gymnasium's design should integrate specific features tailored to accommodate a wide range of activities.

- Adjustable Basketball Backboards: To cater to various age groups and skill levels, promoting inclusivity and physical development.
- Volleyball Standards: Either wall-mounted or equipped with floor sleeves to facilitate easy setup and versatility for volleyball games and practice.
- Outdoor Fitness Circuit/Stations: Encouraging holistic wellness and physical fitness through a variety of engaging outdoor activities.
- Dedicated Room for Adaptive PE and Yoga: A tranquil, soundproof space for adaptive PE exercises, yoga and relaxation activities, supporting mental and physical well-being adjacent to the gymnasium.
- Dedicated classroom space for health education classes provided by school nurse and health educator in the vicinity of the gymnasium.
- Projection system and appropriate technology to support school assemblies, professional learning and community events in the gymnasium.
- Storage for physical education materials and equipment.
- Separate storage for extended day program equipment and materials.
- Dedicated space for Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy in close proximity to the gymnasium and the adaptive PE space.

Given the gymnasium's role as a hub for after-school and weekend events, the design must include robust security measures and the ability to access this part of the building without

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

having access to the rest of the building. These measures will manage access to the gymnasium and associated facilities, like restrooms, ensuring these areas are secure while still accessible during designated times outside of regular school hours. This thoughtful approach to design will ensure that the gymnasium is a versatile, welcoming, and safe space for the entire school and community.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAMMING

Current

The English Language Development (ELD) teacher provides support in the general education classroom and in the “temporary” modular classroom at Neary Elementary School depending on the student’s English proficiency level. Students in the early stages of learning English require Tier 1 language instruction outside the general education classroom for a prescribed number of hours according to the language acquisition regulations. The location of the current ELD classroom is isolated as compared to the general education classrooms and does not contribute to a feeling of inclusivity.

The reading specialist who provides general education support to students in literacy instruction is currently using a general education classroom that also serves as a make-shift science laboratory and is at the farthest end of the building away from general education classrooms. The reading specialist often works with students in hallways when administering assessments or providing intervention supports in order to remain in closer proximity to the general education classrooms.

Proposed

	Current	Design Alt 1 (4-5)	Design Alt 2 (3-5)	Design Alt 3 (2-5)
English Language Development (ELD) Space	0	1	2	3
Reading Specialist Office	0	1	2	2
Math Specialist Office	0	1	2	2

In the proposed design for Neary Elementary School, an instructional suite would be strategically located in close proximity to the learning neighborhoods to provide general

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

education academic supports to students through push-in instruction or through use of the small group rooms situated in the learning neighborhoods. In addition, the instructional suite would be adjacent to the teacher collaboration space since these specially trained educators often meet with grade level teams to support data analysis and curriculum and instructional planning.

English Language Development

With students who are English Language Learners (ELLs) making up 31% of the student body in The Public Schools of Southborough, the provision of designated classroom spaces for small group instruction in the instructional suite will be crucial for delivering an inclusive, effective, explicit, systematic, and sustained systematic English Language Development (ELD) curriculum. This instructional space would be in constant use throughout the school day based on current and projected enrollment, not only by the English Language Development (ELD) teachers, but also potentially by ELL tutors providing targeted small group lessons. ELD teachers would also provide language instruction in small group rooms in learning neighborhoods and in the general education classrooms when appropriate for the students' needs. Additionally, students who are ELLs benefit from extended learning opportunities during the summer and this space would be pivotal for this offering as well.

Reading Specialist

Reading specialists will continue to provide targeted general education support to students and professional learning guidance to educators. A reading specialist office that can also serve as a small group learning space will support this educator and reading tutors in supporting students who often need a distraction-free environment and frequent progress monitoring assessments. In addition, this space will serve as a place for professional collaboration and data analysis with small groups of educators. The reading specialists meet frequently with grade-level colleagues to support their implementation of the Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction and also collaboratively analyze data so that they can maintain a dynamic approach to the multi-tiered supports.

Mathematics Specialist

The District plans to expand support for students and educators in the area of mathematics by hiring a mathematics specialist in 2025-2026 when the District adopts new high-quality instructional materials. The math specialist will support small groups of students with intervention or extension in the general education classroom, in small breakout rooms, in the math specialist's office. In addition, the math specialist will meet with colleagues to provide professional learning guidance and instructional coaching. This support will be especially important as the District takes on the implementation of new high-quality instructional materials. Again, proximity of the instructional suite to learning neighborhoods will be important to support an inclusive culture and the proximity to the teacher collaboration space will support professional learning goals.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAMMING

Current

Special Education services within The Public Schools of Southborough are designed to meet the individualized academic, social, and emotional needs of students who require specially designed instruction or related services to effectively access the educational curriculum. These services are delivered through a collaborative effort between special education and general education teachers, employing evidence-based instructional strategies.

Currently, 17% of the student body requires an Individual Education Program (IEP). The array of special education services are delivered in the least restrictive environment which ranges from full inclusion to substantially separate classrooms, demonstrating a flexible and responsive approach to each student's needs.

At the elementary level, the District embraces various teaching models-including whole group instruction, small group instruction, and one-on-one teaching to support student needs. The curriculum is delivered through specialized programs, pull-out services, and inclusion services, all designed to provide both academic and social-emotional support tailored to student needs.

Currently, some students are in need of the Communication, Access, Socialization, Transition, Learning, and Emotional Regulation (CASTLE) Program. The CASTLE Program provides intensive, specialized instruction throughout the school day to assist students with unique and significant learning challenges. This program is designed to meet the individual needs of each student, utilizing the principles and procedures of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) to guide its instructional strategies. Whether within the inclusivity of the general education classroom or through more focused settings for small group or one-on-one instruction, the program emphasizes the use of ABA principles and systematic teaching to enable students to generalize their skills across various settings. **At this time, Neary students in the CASTLE program are placed in a CASTLE classroom in a Northborough elementary school.** Families perceive this to be a challenge because Southborough students are not placed with their Southborough peers in these situations.

Additionally, Southborough elementary students in need of the Therapeutic Learning Program (TLP), which is a specialized academic and therapeutic classroom, tailored for students with emotional, behavioral and social disabilities **are placed in a Northborough elementary school**, apart from their Southborough peers. This comprehensive program offers personalized instruction aimed at addressing the unique learning profiles of each student, coupled with continuous therapeutic support throughout the school day. Key to the TLP's philosophy is the integration of students into inclusive classroom settings whenever possible, providing them with the supports necessary to engage with the curriculum alongside their peers.

The expertise within the special education department is supported by an array of specialists, including speech-language pathologists, school psychologists, occupational and physical

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

therapists, board certified behavior analysts, behavior specialists, adaptive physical education teachers, and team chairpersons.

Many of these professionals support the specific Social Emotional Learning (SEL) needs of students. General education teachers use the Second Step curriculum and the Collaborative for Academic Social Emotional Learning (CASEL) framework to guide students' learning in this area. Educators support students in developing SEL competencies through morning meetings, class lessons and integration of topics into all disciplines. The school psychologist, behavior analyst, and behavior specialist support the needs of students on individualized education plans and general education students.

Currently at Neary, the physical spaces allocated for Special Education faculty and related service staff present challenges. Many educators are assigned to shared instructional areas that are hindering the delivery of high-quality, consistent instruction aligned with the District's vision. In addition, special education providers often struggle to secure private spaces for assessments or for confidential parent meetings. The spatial limitations not only affects the quality of instruction but also poses significant accessibility challenges for students with physical disabilities, impacting their ability to participate fully in the school community. Issues such as restricted bathroom access, the inaccessibility of certain rooms like the music room, and limited outdoor play spaces underscore the urgent need for infrastructure enhancements to ensure all students can benefit equally from the educational opportunities provided by The Public Schools of Southborough.

Addressing these infrastructural and spatial challenges is critical for upholding the District's commitment to providing an inclusive, supportive, and accessible learning environment for all students, particularly those requiring specialized education services.

Proposed

	Current	Design Alt 1 (4-5)	Design Alt 2 (3-5)	Design Alt 3 (2-5)
CASTLE classroom	0	1	1	1
Therapeutic Learning Program (TLP) Classroom	0	1	1	1
Learning Centers	1	2	3	4
Calming Room	2	2	2	2
Testing Room	0	1	2	2
<i>Small Group Meeting Room</i>	0	1	2	2

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

The Future Design Needs for the Special Education Program emphasize a strategic integration of special education learning environments within the broader educational framework, ensuring seamless communication and collaboration between special education staff and their general education counterparts. Integration would support even greater levels of inclusivity. The design would include specialized spaces in each learning neighborhood tailored to the unique needs of special education students. Key to this approach is the creation of a small group room between and adjoining to paired academic classrooms to facilitate small group instruction in a manner that minimizes travel and disruption, thereby optimizing the educational experience for these students. Another key feature is the placement of learning centers and substantially separate classrooms within learning neighborhoods. Furthermore, the design calls for the establishment of calming/sensory spaces that would be adjacent to specialized programs, CASTLE and TLP. These spaces are essential for providing a tranquil environment for students needing sensory regulation.

The sensory design of all learning spaces is important. Attention to detail in the selection of views, control of sightlines, and the minimization of potentially disruptive auditory and olfactory stimuli are crucial considerations. These measures aim to create an environment that supports the sensory needs of students, avoiding overstimulation or understimulation. The mechanical and lighting systems are to be meticulously planned to reduce visual distractions, regulate airflow, and minimize ambient noise, incorporating full-spectrum, dimmable lighting solutions to create a visually comfortable space that avoids sensory overload.

The new design would include office space for the school psychologist, certified behavior analyst, behavior specialist, speech and language pathologist, occupational and physical therapists, and the special education team chair. The design would also include a small group room for meeting with small groups of students and a testing space for assessing students as part of the special education process. The design would also include a special education conference room with the space to host up to 15 adults. The conference area will support the functional needs of IEP meetings and special education team collaborations, ensuring that the infrastructure fully supports the department's operational and strategic needs.

This design framework supports a comprehensive approach to creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment for special education students, affirming the district's commitment to fostering academic excellence and personal growth for all students.

The organization and color scheme of the rooms are to be carefully considered to reduce visual clutter and create a serene, engaging learning environment. Proximity and accessibility to other programmatic areas are also critical to ensure ease of access for students and to support optimal acoustic conditions within these special education spaces.

CASTLE Program

Additionally, the design would include a classroom space for a CASTLE Program so that Southborough CASTLE students remain with their peers in town. Central to the CASTLE

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

Program is the creation of a personalized curriculum for every student, utilizing the advanced, web-based Autism Curriculum Encyclopedia (ACE) curriculum. This curriculum addresses a comprehensive range of developmental areas, including functional communication, daily living activities, academic skills, use of Augmentative and Assistive Communication (AAC) devices, vocational training, communication strategies, and social-pragmatic skills. The program champions a collaborative team approach to service delivery, comprising a lead special education teacher, educational support professionals, and specialists in speech and language therapy, physical therapy, and occupational therapy. Enhanced by the support of a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA), Assistive Technology Specialist, AAC consultant, and School Psychologist, the program ensures a holistic educational experience.

In terms of infrastructure, the CASTLE Program necessitates specific design features to support its educational model effectively:

- A versatile classroom that can be divided into two distinct areas for grade-specific teaching and to allow for adaptive instructional group sizes as required.
- Proximity to single-stall restrooms to accommodate privacy and ease of access for students.
- An adjoining calming space for students to de-escalate when necessary, allowing for a smoother transition back into the classroom environment.
- Dynamic workspaces that support one-on-one and small group instruction, enabling personalized learning experiences.
- Multi-sensory work areas are designed to engage students through a variety of stimuli, fostering an inclusive learning environment for all.
- Adaptive use of wall space for educational tools like word walls and visual cues, enhancing memory and learning through accessible whiteboards and other aids.
- Incorporation of the same technological resources found in general education classrooms ensures that students in the CASTLE Program have access to cutting-edge educational tools.
- Through these dedicated spaces and resources, the CASTLE Program aspires to provide a nurturing, effective, and inclusive educational setting that meets the diverse needs of its students, setting the stage for their success both within the school environment and beyond.

The CASTLE classroom would be on the edge of another learning neighborhood with a calming room adjacent that could be accessed, not only by CASTLE students but also by students from other classes in the learning neighborhood. This location would facilitate inclusion when appropriate and support a quieter environment at other times.

The Therapeutic Learning Program (TLP)

The new design would have space for the Therapeutic Learning Program (TLP). The physical environment of the TLP would be designed to be conducive to both learning and emotional support. It encompasses a tranquil space conducive to academic pursuits, areas for students to

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

take breaks and engage in self-regulation strategies. The design specifications for the TLP's special education facilities emphasize several key features:

- Accessibility to physical activity spaces, such as a gym, to allow for movement breaks.
- Close proximity to learning neighborhoods to facilitate integration and a sense of belonging.
- An adjoining calming space for students to de-escalate when necessary, allowing for a smoother transition back into the classroom environment.
- Consideration of acoustics to reduce noise disturbances from adjacent areas, creating a quieter, more focused learning environment.
- Close proximity to counseling services in the social-emotional learning suite to ensure students have immediate access to emotional and behavioral support.
- A dedicated sensory room within the TLP, accessible directly from the program area, provides a safe and supportive space for sensory regulation.

The design would foster an inclusive, supportive environment that meets the comprehensive needs of students within the TLP, facilitating their academic achievement and emotional development in a setting that respects and responds to their individual challenges. The TLP classroom would be on the edge of a learning neighborhood with a calming room adjacent that could be accessed, not only by TLP students but also by students from other classes in the learning neighborhood. This location would facilitate inclusion when appropriate and support a quieter environment at other times.

This design framework supports a comprehensive approach to creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment for special education students, affirming the district's commitment to fostering academic excellence and personal growth for all students.

TEACHER PLANNING, COLLABORATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Current

Professional collaboration stands as a cornerstone of the educational philosophy in The Public Schools of Southborough. The schedule is built to support grade-level teams having shared preparation time each week. Despite this commitment to collaborative planning, the District lacks designated teacher planning spaces. Teachers often resort to meeting within their own classrooms, seated at student desks, contingent upon space availability, which is far from ideal.

The District's professional development program is designed to foster growth for educators at every career stage and embedded into their professional experience so that it is sustained and relevant to their daily practice. Elementary teachers weekly convene by grade level and periodically participate in workshops aimed at enhancing teaching efficacy, curriculum implementation and student learning outcomes.

Faculty meetings and district-wide professional development sessions are currently held in less-than-ideal locations such as the building's library, classrooms, or cafeteria. These settings

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

often suffer from issues like overcrowding, uncomfortable temperatures, and insufficient technological resources for presentations, detracting from the quality of these important gatherings.

Proposed

	Current	Design Alt 1 (4-5)	Design Alt 2 (3-5)	Design Alt 3 (2-5)
Staff Lunch Room and Teacher Preparation	1	1	2	2
Teacher Collaboration Room	0	2	3	4

In order to foster collaboration among educator teams, the District will provide flexible professional learning spaces for varying size groups. These spaces will empower educators to collaboratively design lessons, units, projects, and investigations. Additionally, they will support ongoing examination of student learning data and the ability to provide timely feedback and support for students. The ongoing analysis of data is a cornerstone of the multi-tiered systems of support that reading specialists, math specialists and SEL professionals guide. These collaboration rooms will also serve as venues for professional development workshops.

These teacher collaboration spaces would be strategically positioned near each learning neighborhood and near the instructional suite to facilitate easy access. By placing these rooms just outside of learning neighborhoods, it may be possible to have a removable wall between teacher collaboration rooms making them adaptable to host larger professional development sessions or staff meetings. It is important that teacher collaboration rooms are distinct from staff lunchrooms which also support teacher preparation such as photocopying, lamination and other tasks. This distinction ensures that teacher collaboration rooms are used exclusively for professional collaboration and not for breaks or social gatherings. The teacher preparation room would also include workstations where educational support professionals and itinerant employees can complete tasks given that they do not have dedicated classrooms or offices.

Future teacher collaboration rooms should include:

- **Smaller, Collaborative Spaces:** Areas where grade-level teams can gather for focused planning sessions, ensuring privacy and promoting efficiency in curriculum development and teaching strategy discussions.

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

- **Larger, Open Areas:** Spacious venues equipped for whole-faculty professional development activities, designed to accommodate larger groups comfortably. The larger area may be achieved by joining smaller spaces together.
- **Comfort and Accessibility:** Meeting spaces should offer a comfortable environment, equipped with adequate heating, cooling, and lighting to facilitate year-round use without discomfort.
- **Technological Integration:** Equipping these areas with the latest in presentation technology, including high-quality projectors, sound systems, and internet connectivity to support a wide range of professional development activities.

By prioritizing the creation of these dedicated spaces, The Public Schools of Southborough can further enhance their commitment to professional excellence, fostering an environment where educators are equipped, encouraged, and empowered to grow professionally, for the benefit of students.

LUNCH PROGRAMS

Current

Meals for Neary School students are prepared off-site at the P. Brent Trottier Middle School kitchen, due to Neary's lack of facilities for food preparation and cooking. After preparation, these meals are transported to Neary School, where they are served to approximately 125 students per lunch period in a communal dining area. This setup sees large groups of students moving in and out of the cafeteria space, a bustling hub of activity during meal times.

The District is committed to promoting health and wellness through nutrition, prioritizing the provision of healthy, locally sourced food options. In line with this commitment, the District actively seeks to include locally grown produce in its meal offerings, taking advantage of vegetables harvested from school gardens when possible. There's a vision to further engage students in this initiative by establishing a garden on the grounds of the new school, fostering a hands-on learning experience that connects students directly with the source of their food.

Currently, lunch periods at the District's elementary schools are limited to 20-25 minutes. The cafeteria is a large open space and can be over-stimulating for some students. There are no alternative spaces designed for dining.

Proposed

The new design would include a variety of seating options for students, including smaller breakout spaces to support sensory-sensitive options for students. Furthermore, the new site would include the introduction of on-site kitchen facilities. This would enable the preparation and safe storage of meals within the school, allowing for a wider range of healthy options on the menu. In addition, the new kitchen would provide ample space and design to support traffic flow and strategic service areas organized for efficiency. A new kitchen would also support the

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

District's vision of integrating educational programs focused on health, nutrition, and agriculture directly into the students' learning environment.

HEALTH OFFICE

Current

At the Neary School, the health and wellness of students and staff are under the care of a Commonwealth of Massachusetts and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education licensed RN School Nurse, whose responsibilities extend beyond the traditional confines of medication administration and minor health assessments. The Health Office is a critical hub for evaluating and triaging health concerns, liaising with families and healthcare providers, managing health records, conducting screenings for various physical parameters, and addressing the emotional well-being of the school community. Furthermore, the school nurse plays a crucial role in collaborating with district nursing staff on health education, grant writing, and leading emergency response training for staff.

However, the current Health Office space is notably inadequate for the breadth of services required. In the current space, there is no waiting area or provision for isolating contagious individuals. The sole lavatory, doubling as a changing area and staff restroom, cannot meet the diverse needs of the school population, from toilet training to health-related toileting supervision. The absence of a dedicated handwashing sink outside this lavatory further complicates hygiene practices. Additionally, storage space is severely limited, impacting the secure storage of medications and medical equipment. The lack of a private area for confidential conversations with parents or consultations with staff is another significant shortfall.

Proposed

In envisioning a new design for Neary's Health Office, the goal is to create a space that adequately supports the complex health and wellness landscape of the school community. This includes a larger, more versatile area that can accommodate multiple resting spaces, a dedicated waiting area, and isolation zones for contagious students. Essential facility improvements must include lavatories to serve diverse needs effectively, additional sinks for handwashing outside the lavatories, and expanded secure storage for medications and medical supplies. A private consultation area is also critical, ensuring confidentiality and support for sensitive discussions. This enhanced design will align the physical environment of the Health Office with the expansive role of the school nurse, ensuring optimal health and wellness support for the entire school population.

SOUTHBOROUGH EXTENDED SCHOOL CARE

Current:

The district-run Southborough Extended Day (SEDP) Program is designed to serve the needs of the District's students and families before and after school hours. There are dedicated staff for this program that work separately but in concert with school staff. However, although students are enrolled in the program after the end of the school day staff arrives earlier, so a dedicated

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

space is needed to accommodate SEDP staff. The chart below depicts well the existing numbers of students supported by the SEDP, as well as the demand for spots in the program both before and after school:

Current SEDP Families Accessing SEDP

Finn (K-1)	Woodward (2-3)	Neary (4,5)
60 Families	75 Families	35 Families

Proposed

In the proposed Neary design there will be an office for the Southborough Extended Day Program that allows for safety regarding access to the school as well as dedicated storage space for materials and equipment.

TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

Current

In The Public Schools of Southborough, transportation is provided at no cost for ALL students in grades K-8. Combining schools or adjusting grade configurations would not increase bus traffic at the schools, but would reduce the bus traffic on the main roads and in the surrounding areas.

Currently, the District operates a fleet that includes 14 full-size buses and one half-size bus, catering to the transportation needs of both regular and Special Education students. As of now, 212 (K-5) students do not qualify (residing within a mile of their respective school) for daily bus transportation provided by the District, however, it is the long-standing practice of the District that all students are offered school bus transportation regardless of their residence's distance from school.

Given that the elementary schools do not serve exclusively neighborhood zones and specialized programs are not uniformly distributed across all schools, the District employs a sophisticated transfer bus system. This system facilitates the movement of students between the three elementary schools for both morning arrivals and afternoon departures. Bus routes are designed to accommodate students attending any of the three schools, utilizing the transfer system. Transportation is organized in two tiers: middle and high school students are transported first, followed by the elementary students, optimizing the efficiency of school commutes.

Proposed

The proposal to consolidate schools would improve the efficiency and complexity of the bus system. By reducing the locations that need to be supported, we will gain valuable AM and PM minutes to reduce the overall commute time. The consolidation would also pool vehicles so that

they could support multiple functions and won't be displaced to the extent they are in the current configuration.

The new school's parking facilities will be designed to meet the daily needs of the school and accommodate community events outside school hours. This planning includes:

- Ensuring safe bus access routes that do not conflict with areas designated for student drop-offs and pickups.
- Maintaining secure and controlled zones for deliveries.
- Designing recess and recreational spaces away from traffic, safeguarding the well-being of students during outdoor activities.
- Optimizing traffic flow to avoid confluence at the same locations during peak drop-off/pick-up times as well as special events.
- Reduce bus route lengths for students and reduce overall school related traffic.

FUNCTIONAL & SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS

The school's design vision is centered around creating an adaptable environment that reflects the community's values, prioritizes the well-being of its members, and fosters student learning. The aim is for the entire building to maintain a sense of physical unity, with thoughtful consideration given to the internal and external flow, ensuring that the spaces within are conducive to both movement and connection. Student achievements will be proudly displayed throughout, making the celebration of learning a visible and integral part of the school's atmosphere.

The design will include careful choices regarding design aesthetics, natural light, finishes, and furniture, all tailored to create a welcoming and appropriate environment for the students.

The Media Center will be adjacent to STE learning labs and art rooms to support inquiry across disciplines. The school's layout will thoughtfully separate academic areas from spaces designated for community use, an aspect critical for maintaining security and functionality.

Classroom organization will be strategically designed in learning neighborhoods to promote collaboration, with classrooms and specialized education areas distributed throughout the building to support integrated and inclusive education. Small group rooms between general education classrooms will allow for special education academic support and peer to peer collaboration to happen in quiet settings but close to the general education classroom. Furthermore, the learning commons, directly outside of and visible from grade-level classrooms, will also facilitate shared educational initiatives, allowing for flexible grouping of students and targeted instructional experiences. This space might also accommodate multiple classes to gather for presentations, performances, or community meetings.

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

Specialty classrooms, including those for art, world language, music, media, and STE will be purposefully located to support interdisciplinary learning. By placing STE Learning Labs and art rooms adjacent to the media center, students will engage in inquiry that bridges these spaces and is supported by multiple educators. In addition, the instructional support suite and teacher collaboration spaces will be strategically located at the edges of learning neighborhoods to support targeted academic support for students as well as embedded and sustained professional learning. The locations of components of the special education program will allow for inclusion and seamless integration, while parts of the program will be situated in a special education suite that allows for confidentiality and distraction-free assessments and support when needed. This layout is intended to enhance cross-disciplinary collaboration and ensure all students have equal access to the rich array of educational resources and opportunities the school offers.

The design would incorporate gathering spaces for various groups within the community. While grade levels or cross-grade level groups might gather in the learning commons of a learning neighborhood, a larger contingent of the school could gather in the auditorium, which will also serve as a music learning space. For whole school or larger community events, the gymnasium will serve as a communal space.

The design would embody the community's overarching objectives and priorities and adhere to the District's core design principles, outlined as follows:

- Purposeful Outdoor Environments: Dedicated spaces outdoors for academic pursuits, social-emotional development, and recreation in a safe and secure manner
- Promoting Unity Across Grade Levels: A focus on fostering connections and a sense of unity within and across different grades.
- Adaptable Learning Environments: Ensuring spaces are versatile enough to accommodate the diverse needs of every learner.
- Forward-Thinking Design: Creating spaces and adopting practices that not only address current educational requirements but are also adaptable to future needs.
- Community and Culture at the Forefront: Envisioning the project as a means to protect, connect, and cultivate the school's community and cultural heritage.
- Foundational Emphasis on Elementary Education: Recognizing elementary education as crucial for laying the groundwork for academic achievement and social-emotional well-being.
- A Model of Sustainability: Championing a school facility that serves as a dynamic educational resource, promoting sustainability and environmental stewardship.
- A Model of Safety and Security: Providing flexibility while maintaining safety and security protocols will be part of the design.

SECURITY & VISUAL ACCESS REQUIREMENTS

Current

The Public Schools of Southborough prioritizes the safety and security of all students and staff, aiming to enhance public safety for all community members who interact with or utilize school facilities. This commitment extends to minimizing risks to individuals and preventing damage or loss to district property. The school has established a comprehensive approach to building security, underscored by the following key elements:

- **Structured Safety and Security Governance:** The district has implemented clear administrative guidelines and policies dedicated to supervising safety and security initiatives across all schools and works closely with the Town's Police and Fire Departments safety officials to coordinate.
- **Continuous Security Assessments:** The district undertakes ongoing evaluations to scrutinize existing security measures, identify any shortcomings, assess the requisite level of security, and propose enhancements.
- **Integrated Security Management:** A multi-faceted approach to security is employed, incorporating diverse communication channels, detailed policies and protocols, physical security measures, staff training, and well-defined response strategies. The buildings are locked throughout the school day, and staff use key access cards to enter the building. This approach fosters collaboration among administrators, staff, parents, and students.
- **Comprehensive Background Checks:** All school personnel, including faculty, staff, volunteers, contractors, and vendors present on school grounds, undergo CORI checks, SORI checks, and FBI Fingerprinting checks to ensure the safety of the school environment. Additionally, staff members are mandated to wear identification badges visibly during school hours.
- **Regular Safety Drills:** The school routinely conducts fire alarm and active intruder drills to guarantee that faculty and staff are proficient in accounting for all students swiftly and effectively.
- **Staff Preparedness Training:** Staff members receive ongoing training to adeptly enact the Emergency Response Plan, ensuring readiness in case of emergencies.
- **Cultivating a Vigilant Community:** The school community, including students, faculty, and staff, is educated and encouraged to remain vigilant and report any suspicious or concerning activities or behaviors.

This comprehensive approach speaks to The Public Schools of Southborough's commitment to creating and maintaining a secure educational environment where learning and growth can flourish unimpeded by concerns for personal safety or property protection.

Proposed

The future design of the school's security system aims to strike a balance between fostering a welcoming atmosphere for students, families, and the broader community and integrating a comprehensive suite of advanced security measures. These features, while not exhaustive, are crucial for ensuring a protected learning environment:

Neary Elementary School Education Program

Educate - Inspire - Challenge

- Enhanced Entrance and Lobby Security: Implement a secure, single-entry door system for each school or program, equipped with a door-release mechanism, intercom, video surveillance, and a sophisticated visitor management system. All additional exterior doors should be locked at the commencement of the school day, with exit-only functionality and surveillance.
- Dedicated Access Points for Operational Needs: Ensure separate and safe access routes for kitchen operations, facilities management, and shipping/receiving, distinct from the main entrance, to alleviate congestion and enhance security.
- Clear and Informative Signage: Install signage to guide visitors, contractors, and vendors directly to the administration area for secure entry processing. Identification markers on doors and windows, along with evacuation maps in all occupied rooms, will enhance navigation and safety.
- Defined School Perimeter: The school's boundaries should be distinctly marked from public areas, with landscaping designed to maintain unobstructed views of the school's exterior for surveillance purposes.
- Strategically Planned Vehicular Access: Design vehicular access that incorporates safety measures such as bollards, no-parking zones, and specified drop-off points, ensuring a clear separation between general traffic and buses. Safe routes should be established for pedestrians and cyclists, with unambiguous access for emergency and public safety vehicles.
- Access Control Systems: Adopt best practices in access control technologies for entrances to the building, classrooms, and other critical areas to manage entry efficiently.
- Optimal Exterior Lighting: Install adequate lighting around walkways, entrances, and parking areas, focusing on reducing spill-over lighting into neighboring areas and maximizing energy efficiency.
- Coordinated Video Surveillance: Establish a video surveillance system with clear protocols for operation and maintenance in collaboration with local law enforcement agencies.
- Segmented spaces for community use (i.e., gymnasium)

By incorporating these strategic security enhancements in the design, the school not only ensures the safety of its inhabitants but also maintains an inviting environment conducive to learning and community engagement.