

# Neary Building Project Overview

Select Board, School Committee, and Advisory Update

April 3, 2025





# Agenda

**Why do we need to do something?**

**Process**

**School Research Subcommittee  
MSBA**

**Educational Benefits**

**Schematic Design Phase**

**Project Cost and Funding**

**Next Steps**

**Impact of Yes and No Votes  
How to Stay Informed**



# Neary Existing Conditions

## **Major Building Systems:**

- Electrical system - Outdated and undersized, with a limited ability to update larger systems such as HVAC and kitchen equipment.
- Roof - Leaks, needed to be replaced for years. The roof consultant recommended replacement within five years (2021).
- Windows - Original to the building, single pane inefficient, recommend replacement ASAP
- HVAC - Equipment and controls are significantly outdated, with no ability to control the climate in the building with the exception of the library, main office and isolated classrooms.

## **Building Envelope:**

- Asbestos abatement - Asbestos has been detected in various forms throughout the building, windows, pipe insulation, wall paneling, ceiling panels and tile floors, need to comply with abatement regulations.

# Why do we need to do something?

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# Neary Existing Conditions

**ADA Compliance:** 2021 Southborough ADA Compliance Study - Neary needs to address areas of noncompliance. The building needs to be brought into compliance, including but not limited to bathroom facilities, window heights, width of doorways, the height of doorknobs, and access ramps to the building and parking lots.

**Building Security, Student and Staff Safety:**

Not designed for today's safety and security standards.

Fire Suppression - Currently, there is no fire suppression system in the building.

**Neary has seen no major capital investment since opening in the 1970's, outside of regular maintenance and addition of a few permanent modular classrooms.**

# Margaret A. Neary Elementary School

## Existing Conditions

The current Neary facility does not have the capacity to deliver the type of programming that grants students an excellent educational experience.



## Base Repair

To meet the educational programming requirements and to bring the current building to code the Base Repair cost is estimated to be \$63,000,000, prior to state reimbursement.

**Additional photos - Found here - [Neary Existing Conditions Photos](#) and [Slideshow](#)**

# Process

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# Process

## The Town of Southborough:

Formed Capital Planning - School Research Subcommittee in Fall 2020 and work continued through March 2022 re: enrollment studies and potential re-alignment of K-8 school buildings.



### **NBC Formed**

NBC Formed by Select Board in February 2022 as a culmination of school research work and in anticipation of MSBA Core Building Project.

### **Accepted Invitation**

Accepted the MSBA Board of Directors invitation to its Core Building Program in the **spring of 2022**, with Town Meeting allocating Feasibility Funding.

### **Process Commenced**

Began the MSBA process on **August 1, 2022**.



# **Grade-Level Configuration Evaluation - 2021-2022 School Research Subcommittee**

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# Capital Planning - School Research Subcommittee Background

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- School Research Subcommittee formed in September 2020
- Representatives from Capital Planning, Advisory, and Southborough School Committee, plus school administration
- School Research Subcommittee finished its work and made final presentation to Southborough K-8 School Committee in Feb 2022
- Included significant demographic analysis to ensure we had appropriate understanding of current and future enrollment trends



# School Research Subcommittee Recommendations

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- Moving away from current model of three elementary schools and one middle school.
- Not consolidating three elementary schools into two (Finn and Woodward).
- Not move Grade 5 to Trottier. While space exists at Trottier to add Grade 5 this scenario was not recommended based on educational reasons.
- Decommission Woodward and consolidate elementary grades at Finn and Neary.  
(Recommendation would allow fixing arguably one of the most discussed topics among parents of school aged children in Sboro – i.e. too many transitions. Would consolidate the operations of K-8 into three facilities and resolve almost all major capital needs for the schools for the next 20 years.).
- Consolidation would provide the Town with room to solve current space issues for Town departments.  
(Using the closed school building and provide excess space to allow disposal of older buildings before costly repairs are needed.)



# Why didn't the NBC study the option of moving grade five to the P. Brent Trottier Middle School?

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The **Capital Planning Committee – School Research Subcommittee**, in 2021, studied adding grade five to the P. Brent Trottier Middle School as part of its evaluation of grade-level configuration options. Although the space does exist at Trottier it was not recommended for further study for the following reasons:

1. **Developmental Responsiveness**
2. **Academics and Teaching and Learning**
3. **Educator Licensure**
4. **Operational Challenges**



# MSBA Process

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# MSBA Overview

MSBA is a state agency that accepts a limited number of applications through a **highly competitive process each year to provide grants for the construction and renovation of public schools.**

By entering this process, the Town of Southborough stands to receive state money to help pay for the new school's construction.

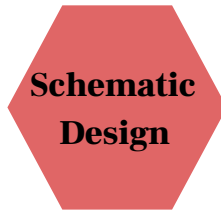
For the **past 36 months**, the Neary Building Committee has been engaged in the feasibility study, preliminary design, and schematics of the plan.



**Completed**



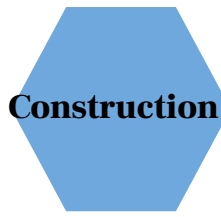
**Completed**



**Completed**



**May 10 and May 13, 2025**



**2026 - 2027**

# Studied 12 Options

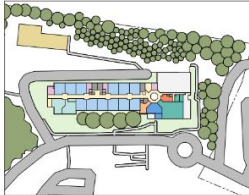
## PDP Alternatives

**A.1: BASE REPAIR  
NEARY SITE  
(305 ENROLLMENT)**



**FIRST FLOOR**

**A.2: BASE REPAIR  
WOODWARD SITE  
(305 ENROLLMENT)**



**SECOND FLOOR**

**B.1: ADD/RENO  
NEARY SITE  
(305 ENROLLMENT)**



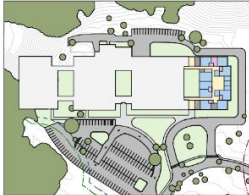
**B.2: ADD/RENO  
NEARY SITE  
(450 ENROLLMENT)**



**B.3: ADD/RENO  
WOODWARD SITE  
(450 ENROLLMENT)**



**B.4: ADD/RENO  
NEARY SITE  
(610 ENROLLMENT)**



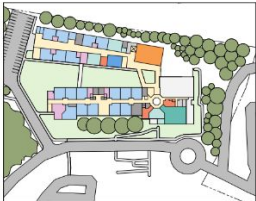
# Studied 12 Options

PDP Alternatives - Cont.

**B.5: ADD/RENO  
WOODWARD SITE  
(610 ENROLLMENT)**



**FIRST FLOOR**



**SECOND FLOOR**

**C.1: NEW CONSTRUCTION  
NEARY SITE  
(305 ENROLLMENT)**



**C.2: NEW CONSTRUCTION  
NEARY SITE  
(450 ENROLLMENT)**



**C.3: NEW CONSTRUCTION  
WOODWARD SITE  
(450 ENROLLMENT)**



**C.4: NEW CONSTRUCTION  
NEARY SITE  
(610 ENROLLMENT)**



**C.5: NEW CONSTRUCTION  
WOODWARD SITE  
(610 ENROLLMENT)**





# Narrowed to Three Options

Option 1:  
New Construction  
Grades 4-5 (305)

Option 2:  
Add / Reno  
(Grades 2-5 610)

Option 3:  
New Construction  
(Grades 2 -5 610)

## Preferred Design Selected by NBC

After extensive work by the Neary Building Committee, the preferred option is **new construction on Neary Site (Grades two through five).**





## Major Factors in NBC Vote

- Educational benefits of the four-grade school vs. two grade school- Substantial educational benefits expected from a modern school that allows current best practices in teaching including student support services.
- Economy of scale achieved in cost of a four grade school – (i.e. preliminary cost estimate indicated that a four grade school would cost about 50% more than a two-grade school – not double).

# Educational Features

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# Features of a New School (Grades 2- 5)

The design is centered on the educational program vision, which aligns with the District's strategic plan, ***Vision 2026: Educate, Inspire, and Challenge.***



## Enhanced Safety and Security Measures

Prioritizes student and staff safety with state-of-the-art security systems, including controlled entry points, surveillance, and emergency response plans. These improvements create a secure learning environment where students can focus on learning.



# Seamless Educational Continuity and Stronger Community Connections

Students and families will experience greater continuity in their educational journey by reducing school transitions resulting in stronger relationships among faculty, staff, students, and families.



VIEW OF ENTRANCE FROM SOUTHEAST



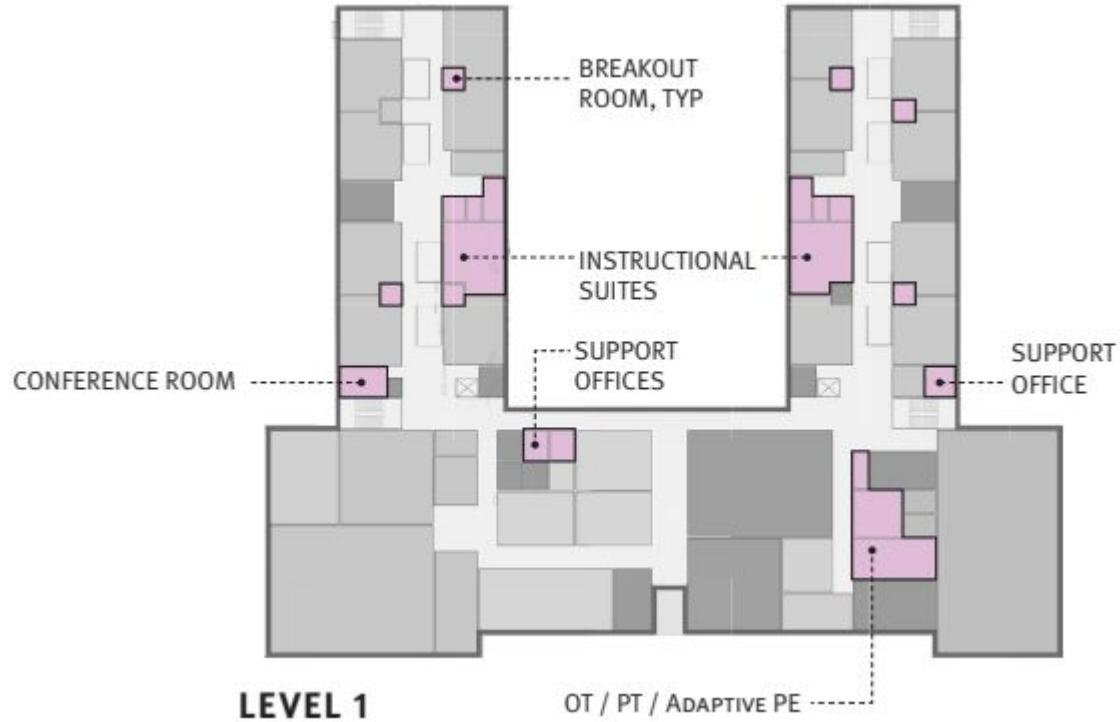
# Learning Neighborhoods that Foster Belonging and Connection

Organized by grade level, these collaborative neighborhoods give students a strong sense of belonging, encourage peer connections, and create a supportive environment that nurtures academic and social development.



## Fully Accessible and Inclusive Facilities

Designed to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance standards, the new school offers barrier-free access and inclusive learning spaces, ensuring that every student, staff member, and visitor can navigate the building independently.





# Flexible, Future-Ready Learning Environments

Adaptable learning spaces equipped with modern technology that support evolving teaching methods and student needs. These spaces can be reconfigured to accommodate different instructional approaches and future educational trends.



# Intentionally Designed Spaces for Specialized Learning

Designed spaces for music, art,  
physical education,  
media/library, and world  
language.



MUSIC ROOM SIZED TO MEET SOUTHBOROUGH'S EXTENSIVE  
BAND & CHOIR PROGRAM



GYM



# Maximization of Resources

Improved use of operational and human resources to meet the needs of all learners. By having a two-elementary school model, the District can better maximize its human and material resources to meet the needs of all learners.



# Schematic Design Phase

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# Schematic Design



## Proposed Building:

99,564 square feet

## Design Process

Arrowstreet spent the five months developing the schematic design for the new four grade school, **working directly with educators.**

## Building Size

Proposed new school is substantially more efficient than current Neary School. Current Neary School (excluding Superintendent's Offices) is 201 sf per student. Proposed 4 grade school is 164 sf per student.

## Future Expansion

New school planned for up to 610 students. If actual student population projections exceed current projections, there is room on Neary site to expand at a later date.

# Project Cost and Funding

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# Project Cost



Gross estimate project cost as of 3-31-25	\$108,517,025
Less: Expected MSBA grant	(\$35,279,062)
Less: Expected geothermal energy credit savings	(\$5,035,697)
<b>Net estimated project cost to Town</b>	<b>\$68,202,266</b>

Estimated annual debt service*	\$4,070,000
Less: Expected K-8 operational savings	(\$1,195,354)
<b>Net Estimated Annual Cost of Project</b>	<b>\$2,874,646</b>

*\*Permanent 30-year bond with a projected interest rate of 0.0425*

**Standalone anticipated residential real estate taxes owed in the first full year of permanent bond with an average home value projection of \$1,245,274 = \$703 annually**



# History of Project Cost

<b>Date of Cost Projection</b>	<b>Estimated Town Share of Total Project Cost</b>
5/9/2024	\$123,000,000
7/23/2024	\$107,811,301
8/8/2024	\$84,745,036
2/13/2025	\$70,442,765
3/28/2025	\$68,202,266



# COST COMPARISON

## RECENT MSBA ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

### COMPARABLE SCHOOL PROJECTS

SCHOOL NAME	DISTRICT	CONSTRUCTION START DATE	STUDENT ENROLLMENT	BUILDING AREA (GSF)	BUILDING COST		SITE COST		TOTAL COST	
					TRADE/BUILDING (ESCALATED)	COST / SF	SITWORK (ESCALATED)	COST / SF	TOTAL CONSTRUCTION (ESCALATED)	COST / SF
Elmwood Elementary	Hopkinton	Aug. 2025	1,195	175,002	\$80,910,079	\$462	\$18,391,980	\$105	\$131,202,423	\$750
Greylock	North Adams	Sept. 2025	240	73,600	\$32,785,187	\$445	\$8,991,240	\$122	\$55,185,683	\$750
Green Meadow Elementary	Maynard	Jan. 2025	395	90,300	\$43,173,058	\$478	\$10,313,800	\$114	\$70,914,000	\$785
Devalles Elementary	New Bedford	April 2025	760	124,160	\$67,814,406	\$546	\$10,004,424	\$81	\$101,407,821	\$817
Fort River Elementary	Amherst	Aug. 2024	575	105,750	\$53,836,668	\$509	\$13,132,030	\$124	\$87,570,847	\$828
Countryside Elementary	Newton	April 2025	465	76,000	\$37,492,035	\$493	\$9,688,245	\$127	\$63,330,855	\$833
Berkeley Comm. School #	Berkeley	Feb. 2026	385	84,620	\$42,987,692	\$508	\$12,533,349	\$148	\$71,319,658	\$843
<b>Neary Elementary</b>	<b>Southborough</b>	<b>June 2026</b>	<b>610</b>	<b>99,564</b>	<b>\$48,455,342</b>	<b>\$487</b>	<b>\$14,616,599</b>	<b>\$147</b>	<b>\$87,219,252</b>	<b>\$876</b>
Fox Hill #	Burlington	Jan. 2026	325	91,000	\$47,108,088	\$518	\$15,368,238	\$169	\$81,874,890	\$900
Hatherly Elementary #	Scituate	Sept. 2025	460	106,084	\$57,960,355	\$546	\$18,448,622	\$174	\$98,086,928	\$925
South Elementary *#	Stoughton	Sept. 2025	515	101,550	\$53,832,677	\$530	\$17,405,928	\$171	\$94,900,792	\$935
<b>Average Cost / SF:</b>						<b>\$502</b>	<b>\$135</b>		<b>\$840</b>	

\*Schools with CM at Risk Contract

# Schools above Total Construction Cost Average

Currently, the Neary Project's construction cost/SF is lower than the recent average and is lower than the only comparable project with a CMAR construction contract.

The cost/SF related to Site Work is higher than average due to the size of the parcel, required utility work, and considerations for nearby wetlands.

The total cost/SF, while above the listed average, is trending similarly with projects scheduled to begin construction in late '25 - early '26.

# Gross Cost of Project, Impacted to Average House Annually



- Amounts presented are solely for this project on a gross basis
- Do NOT include any operational savings expected

FY 26	- \$	89.41
FY 27	- \$	562.89
FY 28	- \$	949.25
FY 29	- \$	1,033.65
FY 30	- \$	1,026.28
FY 31	- \$	994.61

# Estimated K-8 Operational Savings



- There is an expected operational savings with the new school.
- Transportation savings if transportation is brought in house by the District (Currently contracted).

## **Estimated savings as a result of staffing (Cumulative):**

FY 26	- \$572,669
FY 27	- \$1,107,039
FY 28	- \$1,149,383
FY 29	- \$1,193,500
FY 30	- \$1,239,471
FY 31	- \$1,287,379

(Includes benefit savings estimated by Town)

# Overall Town Budget Projections with Neary Project



**Southborough Town Treasurer has prepared a projection of total town budget including Neary project thru Fiscal Year 2032.**

Overall expected YOY increases in the average residential tax bill are:

FY 26	- 7.97%	- \$	1,054.10	increase to average residence
FY 27	- 9.97%	- \$	1,423.16	increase to average residence
FY 28	- 5.99%	- \$	940.33	increase to average residence
FY 29	- 2.05%	- \$	340.62	increase to average residence
FY 30	- 3.38%	- \$	573.76	increase to average residence
FY 31	- 3.36%	- \$	589.10	increase to average residence
FY 32	- 3.75%	- \$	681.25	increase to average residence

# Capital Items included in Cost Projections



- All capital articles previously approved at Town Meeting that were debt funded
- All proposed new capital articles for FY26
- Finn, Woodward and Trottier Roofs in next few years
- Trottier Boiler
- Choate Field project (\$1M of overall project cost)
- Finn and Cordaville User Group Modifications, if project proceeds
- Woodward School Early Childhood Modifications, if project proceeds

Does not contemplate road bond cost beyond annual funding or wastewater treatment in early discussion days

# COST OF NET-ZERO

## GROUND-SOURCE HEAT PUMPS VS. VRF SYSTEM

	Estimated Construction Cost	Potential Incentives		Construction Cost After Incentives
		Sec 48 - Alternative Energy @ 34% Rate <sup>1</sup>	Mass Save (Path 1)	
<b>VRF</b>	\$8,308,330	(Does Not Qualify)	\$358,455	\$7,949,875
<b>GSHP</b>	\$11,080,068	\$3,767,223	\$1,268,474	\$6,044,371

GSHPs have a higher average construction cost than conventional VRF HVAC systems

After applicable incentives, designing to Net-Zero allows for total up-front savings of \$1,855,504

The proposed GSHP system has a projected annual savings (utility costs, operations, and maintenance) of \$50,313 versus VRF

1. Assumed using tax-exempt bonds

Notes: Cost of GSHP and EV updated to PM&C 2/6/25 reconciled estimate.  
Mass Save updated to reflect tonnage in GGD SD.

# Next Steps

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# Key Votes



**May 10, 2025 - 9 AM**  
**Special Town Meeting**  
**Algonquin Regional High School**  
**IN PERSON ONLY**  
**Two-Thirds Required for Approval**



**Two  
separate  
votes**

**May 13, 2025**  
**Ballot Question**  
**8 AM - 8 PM**  
**Trottier School**  
**Majority Vote**



# Impact of a Yes Vote



**If voters approve** the project at the town election, the MSBA project team would finalize the design of a new elementary school and construction would begin in the summer of 2026. The school would open in the fall of 2028.

# Impact of a Yes Vote with Unknown Economic Conditions



- Discussion of protocols that we are willing to commit to if project comes in over estimated town share.
- Contingency is already built into the project budget.

# Impact of a No Vote



- Need to immediately address the base repairs for Neary to continue to operate as a school, which have been deferred during this current process.
- Educational plan would not be met.
- Escalating construction costs annually far exceed cost of borrowing.
- MSBA involvement would cease and any future MSBA involvement on a future project would require the filing of a new Statement of Interest by the town. 100% of these expenses would likely have to be paid with local tax dollars.

# Stay Informed

- Neary Building Project Website
- Facebook
- ParentSquare
- Neary Building Committee Meetings
- Upcoming Forums



**Thank You**

**Questions**



# Appendix

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# Relocation Plan

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## Relocation Plan During Construction

### The goals are to ensure:

- the integrity of the grade-level experience for all students
- student safety and minimize the direct impact of construction on students, faculty, and staff
- continuity for families and students

### Challenges

Sharing of offices, limited space, modular classrooms - not a long term solution

### 2026-2027

Finn: Grades PreK (Sboro), Kindergarten, One, and Two  
Woodward: Grades Three, Four, and Five

### 2027-2028

Finn: Grades PreK (Sboro), Kindergarten, One, and Two  
Woodward: Grades Three, Four, and Five

### 2028-2029

Woodward: Grades PreK, Kindergarten, and One  
New School: Grades Two - Five

