

1. Meeting Materials

Documents:

DRAFT SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENTATION DISCUSSED AT 2-4-22
MEETING (PDF).PDF
MSBA SLIDE FOR SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRESENTATION (PDF).PDF

School Committee
Readout and Findings
February 9, 2022

Capital
Planning
Committee –
School
Research
Subcommittee



Committee Members

- Jason Malinowski, Chair (Capital Planning Committee)
- Keturah Martin (School Committee)
- Kathy Cook (Advisory Committee)

Non-Voting Members

- Greg Martineau, Superintendent
- Keith Lavoie, Assistant Superintendent of Operations

Agenda

- **Background and Charge of the Sub-Committee**
- **Enrollment Data Analysis**
- **School Administration Space Needs Scenarios and Conclusions**
- **Funding Analysis**
- **Recommendations and Next Steps**

Background and Charge of the Subcommittee

How did this Committee come into existence?

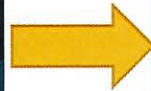
- Town formed Capital Planning Committee in March 2020;
- Identified many aging buildings in town and school infrastructure that would have competing capital needs in next ten years;
- Approached School Committee to work collaboratively to revisit 2013 School Housing report and answer questions that have existed for over 10 years in the community related to the number of K-8 schools;
- Overall goal was to create a vision and path forward for the Town of Southborough in a collaborative fashion instead of siloed planning.

Committee Charge

The primary charge of the School Research Sub-Committee is as follows:

- Review Southborough Schools K-8 Housing Study Group Summary Report, dated February 13, 2013;
- Undertake any actions to update the previously completed summary report;
- Undertake any additional steps needed to provide a comprehensive view of current and future school enrollment/space in order to provide a recommendation on whether any schools can be consolidated;
- Provide formal read-out and recommendation to Southborough School Committee and Capital Planning Committee; and
- Upon votes from Southborough School Committee and Capital Planning Committee, make presentation to joint meeting of Board of Selectmen and Advisory Committee.

Timeline of the Committee's Activities



	Date Completed
Committee Formed	October 2020
Enrollment Study Analysis - NESDEC Data	December 2020
Neary School Facilities Study	April 2021
Update Letter to Community	June 2021
School Administration Internal Space Needs Study	October 2021
Enrollment Study Analysis – RLS Data	December 2021
Presentation to School Committee with Recommendations	February 2022
Potential Neary Feasibility Study Article at Town Meeting	Spring 2022

Since October 2020, Committee has held 21 public meetings

Enrollment Data Analysis

Comparison of Enrollment Studies

NESDEC Report – February 2021

School District: Southborough, MA - PK TO 8 ONLY 2/1/2021

Enrollment Projections By Grade*															
Birth Year	Births	School Year	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	UNGR	K-8	PK-8
2015	93	2020-21	42	104	143	120	134	123	129	132	123	127	0	1135	1177
2016	101	2021-22	42	134	107	148	116	136	125	128	128	120	0	1142	1184
2017	77	2022-23	42	100	138	110	144	118	138	124	124	125	0	1121	1163
2018	86 (prev.)	2023-24	43	112	103	142	107	146	120	137	120	121	0	1108	1151
2019	99 (prev.)	2024-25	43	129	116	106	138	108	149	119	133	117	0	1115	1158
2020	92 (est.)	2025-26	43	119	133	120	103	140	110	148	115	130	0	1118	1161
2021	91 (est.)	2026-27	44	119	123	137	116	104	142	109	143	112	0	1105	1149
2022	89 (est.)	2027-28	44	116	123	127	133	118	106	141	105	140	0	1109	1153
2023	91 (est.)	2028-29	44	119	120	127	123	135	120	105	136	102	0	1087	1131
2024	92 (est.)	2029-30	44	120	123	124	123	125	137	119	102	133	0	1106	1150
2025	91 (est.)	2030-31	44	118	124	127	120	125	127	136	115	100	0	1092	1136

RLS Report – December 2021

Table 8: Current and Projected Enrollment - Southborough School District

	F-2015	F-2016	F-2017	F-2018	F-2019	F-2020	F-2021	F-2022	F-2023	F-2024	F-2025	F-2026	F-2027	F-2028	F-2029	F-2030
Total K to 8	1,268	1,257	1,235	1,191	1,200	1,135	1,152	1,133	1,124	1,138	1,130	1,131	1,149	1,156	1,196	1,237
Total K to G1	1,140	1,138	1,105	1,080	1,060	1,031	1,035	1,031	1,012	1,007	1,028	1,005	1,015	1,016	1,050	1,082
Kindergarten	128	119	130	111	140	104	117	102	112	131	102	126	134	141	146	155
Grade 1	121	136	120	133	117	143	116	124	108	120	139	108	134	142	149	155
Grade 2	110	127	138	124	138	120	146	119	128	111	123	143	111	138	146	154
Grade 3	131	118	128	134	120	134	127	146	119	128	111	123	143	111	137	146
Grade 4	159	137	121	129	135	123	137	129	149	121	130	113	125	146	113	140
Grade 5	138	161	137	129	133	129	123	136	129	148	121	130	113	124	145	113
Grade 6	161	143	159	136	129	132	128	122	136	128	147	120	129	112	124	144
Grade 7	156	157	146	152	135	123	129	125	119	132	125	143	117	126	109	121
Grade 8	164	159	156	143	153	127	129	129	125	119	132	125	143	117	125	109

Conclusion: RLS Demography methodology more reliable and statistically sound methodology

RLS Enrollment Study – Baseline and +/-10 % Fertility and Migration

	10 Percent Decrease in TFR and CMR					Original Fertility/Migration Assumption					10 Percent Increase in TFR and CMR				
	F-2026	F-2027	F-2028	F-2029	F-2030	F-2026	F-2027	F-2028	F-2029	F-2030	F-2026	F-2027	F-2028	F-2029	F-2030
Total K to G8	1,119	1,122	1,112	1,136	1,160	1,131	1,149	1,156	1,196	1,237	1,144	1,176	1,200	1,256	1,315
Total G1 to G8	1,005	1,003	988	1,004	1,020	1,005	1,015	1,016	1,050	1,082	1,005	1,029	1,045	1,095	1,144
Kindergarten	114	119	125	131	141	126	134	141	146	155	138	148	155	161	171
Grade 1	108	121	127	133	140	108	134	142	149	155	108	147	157	165	172
Grade 2	143	111	125	130	136	143	111	138	146	154	143	111	151	161	170
Grade 3	123	143	111	125	130	123	143	111	137	146	123	143	111	151	161
Grade 4	113	125	146	113	127	113	125	146	113	140	113	125	146	113	154
Grade 5	130	113	124	145	113	130	113	124	145	113	130	113	124	145	113
Grade 6	120	129	112	124	144	120	129	112	124	144	120	129	112	124	144
Grade 7	143	117	126	109	121	143	117	126	109	121	143	117	126	109	121
Grade 8	125	143	117	125	109	125	143	117	125	109	125	143	117	125	109

School Administration Space Needs Scenarios and Conclusions

Scenario 1: Status Quo

Analysis of Scenario 1: Keep Current Configuration - PreK-1, 2-3, 4-5, 6-8

School	Meets Occupancy Permit	Meets Septic Capacity	Meets Space Requirements	Collaboration Maximized	Resources Maximized	Minimizes Student Transitions
Mary E. Finn Elementary School	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Albert S. Woodward Elementary School	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Margaret A. Neary Elementary School	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
P. Brent Trotter Middle School	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Scenario 1: Status Quo

Recommendations

- **Recommendation: Serious consideration needs to be given to move away from the model of three elementary schools and one middle school**
 - Confirm via survey and public outreach what the Committee has heard verbally that parents of elementary school age children want less transitions
 - Study long term impact to school department budgets if an elementary school were to be eliminated

Scenario 2:
Decommission
Woodward, Consolidate
elementary at Finn and
Neary

Analysis of Scenario 2: PreK-2, 3-5, 6-8 (Decommission Woodward)

School	Meets Occupancy Permit	Meets Septic Capacity	Meets Space Requirements	Collaboration Maximized	Resources Maximized	Minimizes Student Transitions
Mary E. Finn Elementary School	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Margaret A. Neary Elementary School	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
P. Brent Trottier Middle School	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

* Uses 10 % Increase in Fertility and Migration

Scenario 2:
Decommission
Woodward, Consolidate
elementary at Finn and
Neary

Scenario 2		Consolidate to Three Schools (Remove Woodward)				
School	Meets Occupancy Permit	Meets Septic Capacity	Meets Space Requirements	Collaboration Maximized	Resources Maximized	Minimizes Student Transitions
Mary E. Finn Elementary School	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Margaret A. Neary Elementary School	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
P. Brent Trotter Middle School	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

* Uses Original Fertility and Migration

Scenario 2: Decommission Woodward, Consolidate elementary at Finn and Neary Recommendations

- **RECOMMENDATION: Continue work on this scenario and advance to next phase**
- **Benefits: Reduces transitions, increases collaboration and maximizes use of resources**
- Finn School –
 - Maximizes use of existing space as early childhood education center
 - Ability exists to add on in future if additional space required
- Neary School –
 - In need of major renovations/upgrades, so can be designed to meet space requirements of Grades 2-5
 - Continues campus approach with Trottier
 - Ability exists to add on in future if additional space required
- Woodward School –
 - Centrally located for town re-use and solves space needs requirements of town departments and allows for decommissioning of town buildings, as well
 - Creates opportunity for a community center using existing infrastructure

Scenario 3: Decommission Neary, Consolidate elementary at Finn and Woodward

Analysis of Scenario 3: PreK-2, 3-5, 6-8 (Decommission Neary)

School	Meets Occupancy Permit	Meets Septic Capacity	Meets Space Requirements	Collaboration Maximized	Resources Maximized	Minimizes Student Transitions
Mary E. Finn Elementary School	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Albert S. Woodward Elementary School	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
P. Brent Trottier Middle School	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Scenario 3: Decommission Neary, Consolidate elementary at Finn and Woodward Recommendations

- **RECOMMENDATION: Not recommended for further consideration/study**
- **Benefits: Reduces transitions, increases collaboration and maximizes use of resources**
- **Finn School –**
 - Maximizes use of existing space as early childhood education center
 - Ability exists to add on in future, if additional space required
- **Neary School –**
 - Eliminates need for renovation/new construction
 - Would eliminate campus for schools, leaving three independent locations
- **Woodward School –**
 - Facility is land locked with little to no ability to expand if future growth occurs
 - Does not meet occupancy permit in this scenario
 - Not central to any other school creating continued logistical challenges particularly related to busing
- **Town Needs**
 - Does not help with infrastructure for town needs, other than a potential parcel of land freeing up (existing Neary footprint)

Scenario 4: Decommission Neary, Move Grade 5 to Middle School

Analysis of Scenario 4: PreK-1, 2-4, 5-8 (Decommission Neary)

School	Meets Occupancy Permit	Meets Septic Capacity	Meets Space Requirements	Collaboration Maximized	Resources Maximized	Minimizes Student Transitions
Mary E. Finn Elementary School	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Albert S. Woodward Elementary School	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
P. Brent Trotter Middle School	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Scenario 4:
Decommission
Neary,
Move Grade 5 to
Middle School
Recommendations

- **RECOMMENDATION: Not recommended for further consideration/study**
- While space certainly exists at Trottier, this scenario does not make sense from an educational policy perspective based on discussions with School Administration.
- Excess space at Trottier could be redeployed potentially for School administration, if needed.

Funding Analysis (Placeholder)

Recommendation and Next Steps

Conclusion and Recommendation

Conclusion: Southborough Public Schools can be consolidated from four to three schools, if the appropriate infrastructure is put into place for Neary School.

Recommendation: Pursue a comprehensive plan to deal with infrastructure at Neary School with a broader plan to consolidate as follows:

Pre K – Grade 1: Finn School (status quo with ability to absorb excess demands of universal Pre-K)

Grade 2 – 5: Neary School (addition of Gr. 2 and 3)

Grade 6 – 8: Trottier School (no change)

What are the
repercussions of
taking no action
this year?

- Neary School
 - \$4M + of immediate capital needs to keep building functioning and safe for students and staff
 - Any delay in advancing more formal plan related to Neary will result in these projects needing immediate action
 - Lost opportunity for full refresh of the facility to bring up to current educational and safety standards, including ADA requirements
- School Transitions
 - Chance to fix arguably one of the most discussed topics among school aged parents in Southborough
 - Ability to consolidate operations into three facilities and resolve almost all major capital needs for schools for the next 20 years
 - Regularly scheduled maintenance/repairs such as roofs will still be required for Finn and Trotter
- Town Capital
 - Opportunity to partially or fully resolve many upcoming Town Capital Projects:
 - Senior Center
 - Library
 - Additional Indoor Recreational Space
 - Town Administration and other non-public safety town departments
 - Ability to dispose of excess space in town buildings before costly repairs are needed
 - Cordaville Hall
 - South Union School

Next Steps

- Neary School
 - Confirmation that School Committee has the data that they need to agree to maintain the current Neary site as an elementary school, subject to feasibility study confirming new versus renovation to consolidate Grade 2 – 5;
 - Form Neary School Building Committee; and
 - Pursue feasibility study for Neary School with funding authorization in Spring 2022 Annual Town Meeting
 - Consideration of ARPA related request to Town of Southborough
- **Seek public input, including the development of an FAQ document by Neary School Building Committee**
- Woodward School
 - If funding is secured for Neary School, agree to a plan, including timing, to close Woodward School and transfer custody to the town for municipal purposes as Community Center.
- Town Capital Planning Committee to work up funding scenarios of “all in” project cost with presentation to Select Board and Advisory.
 - This phase will be largely dependent on the findings of the feasibility study for the Neary School and what options are available to the town

Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Participation

Overview

The Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) was formed in 2004 to replace the former school building assistance program. Southborough built its last three schools (Finn, Trottier and Woodward using the predecessor program.) The MSBA strives to work with local communities to create affordable, sustainable, and energy efficient schools across Massachusetts. The MSBA is funded each year with one cent from the state's current 6.25% sales tax. Unlike the most recent Southborough school projects funded in part by the predecessor MSBA program – the current practice of the MSBA is to fund payments as costs are incurred within fifteen days of submitting a request using the MSBA's Pro-Pay online system. For Southborough's most recent school projects – Trottier, Finn and Woodward – Southborough received state funds equally over the lives of the bonds issued to fund the projects.

The MSBA runs two programs to provide financial assistance to Massachusetts public schools – the Core Program and the Accelerated Repair Program. Southborough applied in 2021 to the Core Program to rehabilitate the Neary School. Southborough's 2021 Statement of Interest (SOI) is currently one of eleven projects being evaluated by the MSBA for acceptance into their Core Program.

If a core project is accepted into the MSBA program, the MSBA will reimburse the district for a percentage of eligible costs. Note that eligible costs are generally significantly less than actual costs due to the application of cost caps which are currently far less than actual school construction costs in Massachusetts. The percentage of eligible costs is determined by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue based on several factors including the affluence of the town in which the district operates.

Pros of Participating in MSBA program:

- Cost of Neary project – whether rehab or build new estimated project cost is significant. Extensive rehab can cost more than new construction. Could be the largest town funded project to date in nominal dollars. MSBA funds anticipated to provide 15-20% of project costs for either significant rehab or total new construction.
- Provides in-house, no additional cost expertise on size, design, sustainable construction, projected demographics, etc. MSBA works as partner to town throughout process.
- MSBA participation forces consideration of all alternatives: partial rehab, full rehab, full new construction, and expansion.

Cons of Participating in MSBA program:

- Only one but significant – Participating in MSBA process could add 2 to 3.5 years to construction timeline.
 - ◆ Additional time could increase total cost significantly especially if inflation continues to be an issue. Current estimate of project completion is 1/1/26 with no MSBA involvement and 1/1/28 to 6/30/29 with MSBA participation. **There are realistic scenarios where the delay in construction could increase the town's final net cost (with MSBA offset) to more than its gross cost without MSBA funding.**
 - ◆ Other pent-up needs from both the town and school sides may not be able to wait for delayed project completion requiring expenditures that would not be necessary with a shortened completion date. **Completion date without MSBA funding could also still be an issue with other town/school capital needs.** Future capital needs of Neary and other Town departments are significant.

Conclusion:

If the Neary project is accepted into the next phase of the MSBA program in March 2022 this committee recommends that we continue partnering with the MSBA. We also recommend that the evaluation of projected project costs continues throughout the initial MSBA partnership to ascertain the projected economic benefit of the partnership.