

Town of Southborough, Massachusetts

Neary Building Committee

April 3, 2025

6:30 PM

Southborough Public Safety Facility – 32 Cordaville Road

First Floor Training Room

Neary Building Committee:

Members Present: Roger Challen, Mark Davis, Denise Eddy, Andrew Pfaff, Kathryn Cook, Chris Evers (virtually and lost connection), and Jason Malinowski

Members Absent: None

Ex-Officio

Members Present: Gregory Martineau, Superintendent of Schools, Stefanie Reinhorn, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, Rebecca Pellegrino, Assistant Superintendent of Finance, and Mark Purple, Town Administrator

Members Absent: Keith Lavoie, Assistant Superintendent of Operations, Kathleen Valenti, Neary School Principal, Steven Mucci, Principal of Woodward School, and Brian Ballantine Town Treasurer/ Finance Director

I. Call Meeting to Order

Jason Malinowski called the Neary Building Committee meeting to order at 6:31 pm.

II. Joint Meeting with Select Board, Southborough School Committee, and Advisory Committee

This excerpt of the Select Board-draft meeting minutes from April 3, 2025, is fully credited to Mark Purple, Town Administrator.

a. Discussion of all aspects of proposed Neary School Project

“Mr. Malinowski introduced the project, reviewed the existing conditions at Neary School, discussed the process to review Building Committee actions and the steps that were taken to get to the proposed project. The School Research Subcommittee recommended moving away from the current model of three elementary schools and one middle school and consolidating into two elementary and one middle. They felt consolidation would provide the Town with room to solve current space issues for Town departments. Superintendent Martineau and his team reviewed grade configurations between the buildings, including moving 5th grade to Trottier, which was not recommended. Mr. Malinowski reviewed the MSBA (Massachusetts School Building Administration) plan for project, including funding. The Committee studied 12 options

for Neary, with different grade configurations and options ranging from repair to new construction. The MSBA provided feedback at every step of the process and options were narrowed to three (new construction with 2 grades; addition/renovation for 4 grades; new construction with 4 grades). The preferred design by the Committee was new construction with 4 grades which was in line with the vision of the Superintendent and team. Two major factors in the decision were educational benefits of 4 grades in one school versus two, and the economy of scale achieved in cost of a four-grade school. Superintendent Martineau talked about the features of a new school which included enhanced safety and security measures, creating stronger community connections and seamless educational continuity and fully accessible and inclusive facilities meeting ADA compliance standards. Mr. Malinowski reviewed the schematic design process, the project cost and financials and the impact on the town budget over the next six years. They discussed the key votes, timing and how a passing and failing vote would impact the project and town. Ms. Betsy Rosenbloom (5 Strawberry Hill Road) asked about considering Finn School during the initial review process. Mr. Malinowski explained the review of options and what changes would need to be made to Finn to accommodate more students.

James Eastwood asked why Woodward School was looked at to shift grades but Finn was not. He suggested closing Neary and to consolidate into Woodward and Finn Schools. Mr. Malinowski explained that it could not be done without permanent modular classrooms. Joanne Pearson (101 Newton Street) asked if educators looked at other schools to learn about licensure issues and grade configurations. Superintendent Martineau said that they had not as decisions were based on space not on research of other schools. Ms. Pearson asked how additional projects could impact the tax rate beyond what is projected. Mr. Hamilton explained his review of Town debt and sources of funding for that debt, as well as difference between capital planning. Mr. Roger Challen of the School Committee spoke about the timing of debt and current ability to take on more. Ms. Bonnie Phaneuf (150 Parkerville Road) asked if the warrant article must approve the gross project value. Mr. Malinowski responded in the affirmative. Ms. Phaneuf asked if the project cost goes over budget, who can approve overage. Mr. Malinowski replied that Town Meeting authorizes the funding, and the Neary Building Committee appointed by the Select Board has control over the budget. Ms. Chelsea Malinowski, Chair of the School Committee, asked if any members had questions and there were none. Mr. Andrew Pfaff, Chair of the Advisory Committee, asked if any members had questions. Mr. Rubenstein asked about variable numbers in the presentation on household impact of the project and Mr. Malinowski said the school project will be the driver of tax increases in 2032. Ms. Marci Jones of Advisory stated she is concerned about how the school fits into the overall priorities for the Town. She is not in support of a new Neary School building.

Ms. Landry asked about Lundblad Field and the Committee's potential response at Town Meeting. Mr. Hamilton stated he felt the Select Board was remiss in oversight responsibilities for the Neary Building Committee and that questions he posed in December 2024 have yet to be answered. He spoke about his concerns about the amount of contingency for this project in an uncertain world. Mr. Malinowski said that they did not respond to Mr. Hamilton's questions because data was not available until recently.

Mr. Hamilton stated he wants to see more details on operational savings to prove numbers. Mr. Stivers stated he feels informed because he has taken advantage of opportunities to do so, sees value in project to educational needs for many decades and the opportunities for additional space for Town departments. Mr. Dennington supports the project, noting that the cost of a new four-grade school was not that much more than a new two-grade school. Ms. Cook stated she understands concerns about cost, but the cost of renovation is more expensive than the new building. Bob Maiorana (12 Parkerville Road) stated his concerns with capping the landfill under Lundblad Field, the need for ongoing testing and potential danger of water quality near Neary School. Mr. Malinowski stated that a separate meeting is being held to discuss this issue next week. Patti Burns-Fiore (3 Rockpoint Road) asked about keeping special education students in the district and its impact on staffing and whether it was ever considered to put four grades at Trottier Middle School and move 7th and 8th grades to Woodward School. Superintendent Martineau stated that it was not considered.”

b. Discussion of all aspects of the Special Town Meeting on 5/10/25

“Ms. Cook asked the Board if they wanted to vote on the project. Mr. Hamilton stated he would like to review the answers to his questions before voting. Mr. Pfaff stated that Advisory will be voting to support the Neary Building at Town Meeting.”

III. Adjournment

Jason Malinowski requested a motion to adjourn.

Jason Malinowski moved, Denise Eddy seconded, and it was unanimously voted, “To adjourn.”

MOTION TO
ADJOURN

Jason Malinowski adjourned the meeting at 9:54 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mariana Silva, Central Office Administrative Assistant

Office of the Superintendent

List of documents used at this meeting:

1. Neary Building Committee Agenda of April 3, 2025
2. Neary Building Project Overview Presentation

Town of Southborough, Massachusetts

Neary Building Committee

April 3, 2025

6:30 PM

Southborough Public Safety Facility – 32 Cordaville Road

First Floor Training Room

May be watched or may participate in the meeting remotely with the meeting link at: <https://ma-southborough.civicplus.com/674/Virtual-Meetings>

Agenda:

- I. Call Meeting to Order
- II. Joint Meeting with Select Board, Southborough School Committee, and Advisory Committee
 - a. Discussion of all aspects of proposed Neary School Project
 - b. Discussion of all aspects of the Special Town Meeting on 5/10/25
- III. Adjournment

Jason W. Malinowski, Chair

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

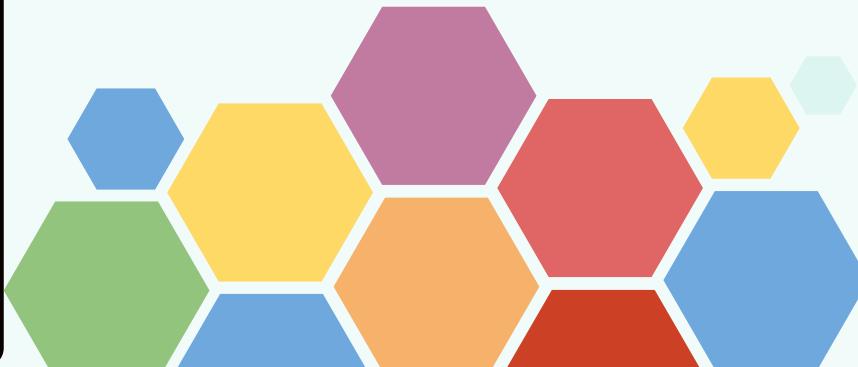
Major Building Systems:

- 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?





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.

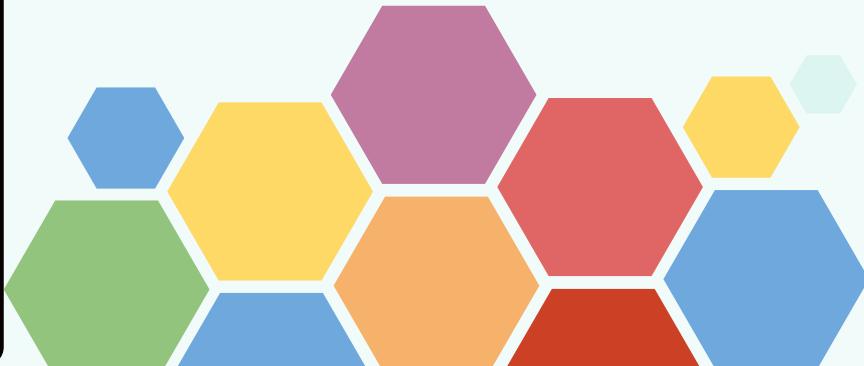


Base Repair

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



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

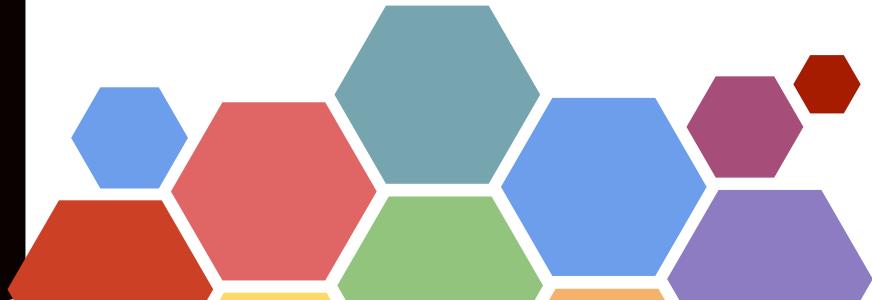
Began the MSBA process on **August 1, 2022**.

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



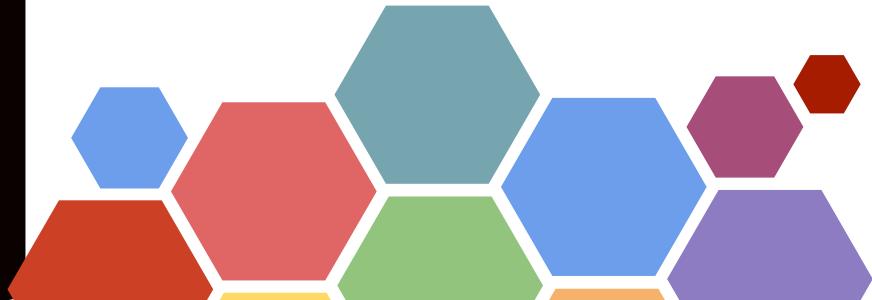
Capital Planning - School Research Subcommittee Background

- 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

- 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?

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

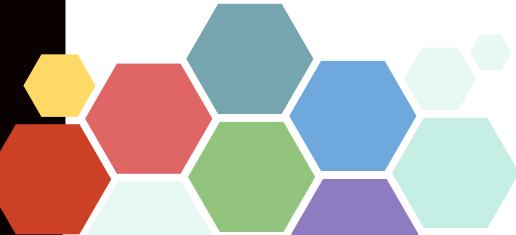


MSBA Overview

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.

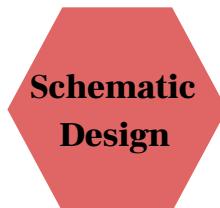
For the **past 36 months**, the Neary Building Committee has been engaged in the feasibility study, preliminary design, and schematics of the plan.



Completed



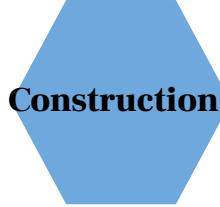
Completed



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)**



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



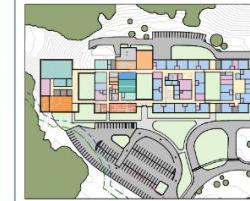
**B.2: ADD/RENO
NEARY SITE
(450 ENROLLMENT)**



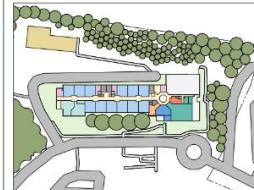
**B.3: ADD/RENO
WOODWARD SITE
(450 ENROLLMENT)**



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



SECOND FLOOR



Studied 12 Options

PDP Alternatives - Cont.

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



FIRST FLOOR

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



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



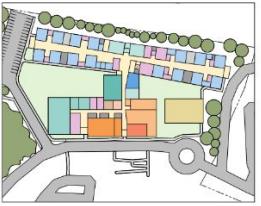
**C.3: NEW CONSTRUCTION
WOODWARD SITE
(450 ENROLLMENT)**



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



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



SECOND FLOOR

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

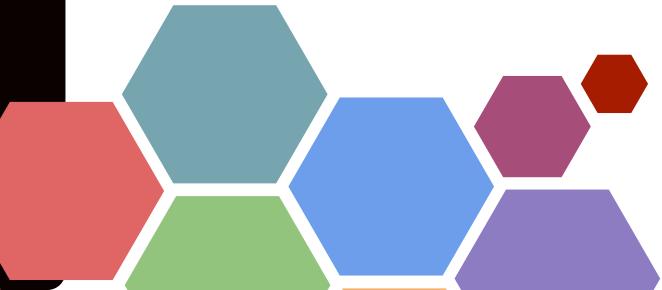
- Educational benefits of the four-grade school vs. two grade school- Substantial educational benefits expected from a modern school that allows current best practices in teaching including student support services.
- Economy of scale achieved in cost of a four grade school - (i.e. preliminary cost estimate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

Educational Features



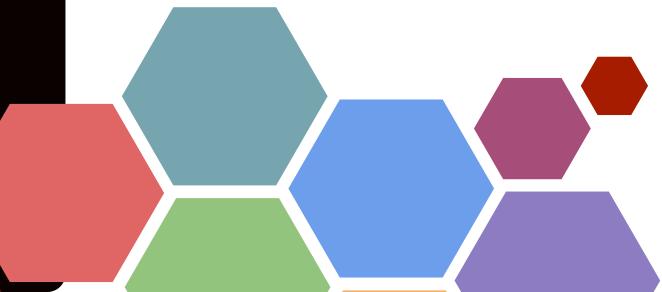
Features of a New School (Grades 2- 5)

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.

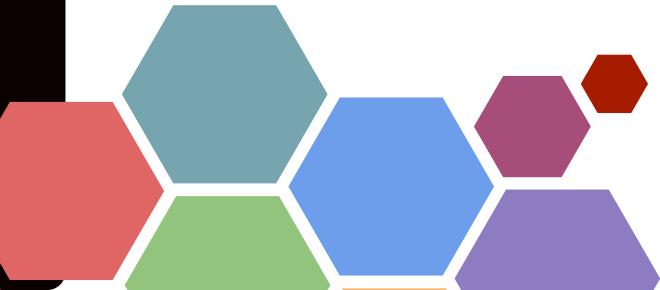


Seamless Educational Continuity and Stronger Community Connections

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.

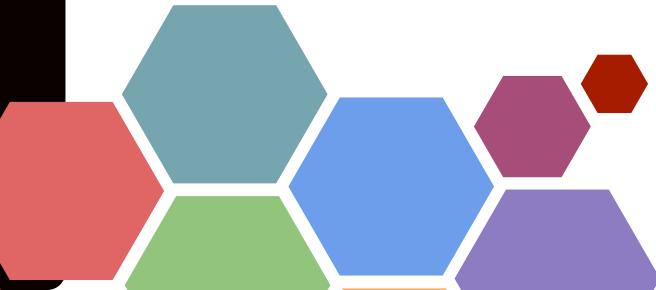


VIEW OF ENTRANCE FROM SOUTHEAST



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.



ARROWSTREET

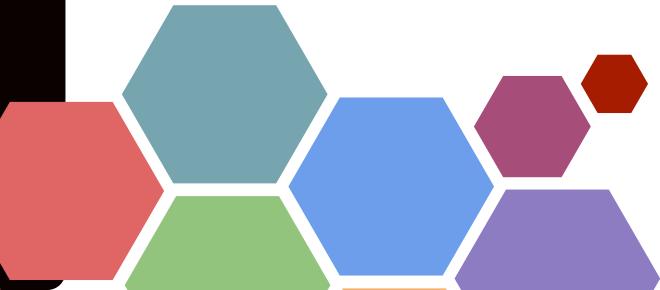
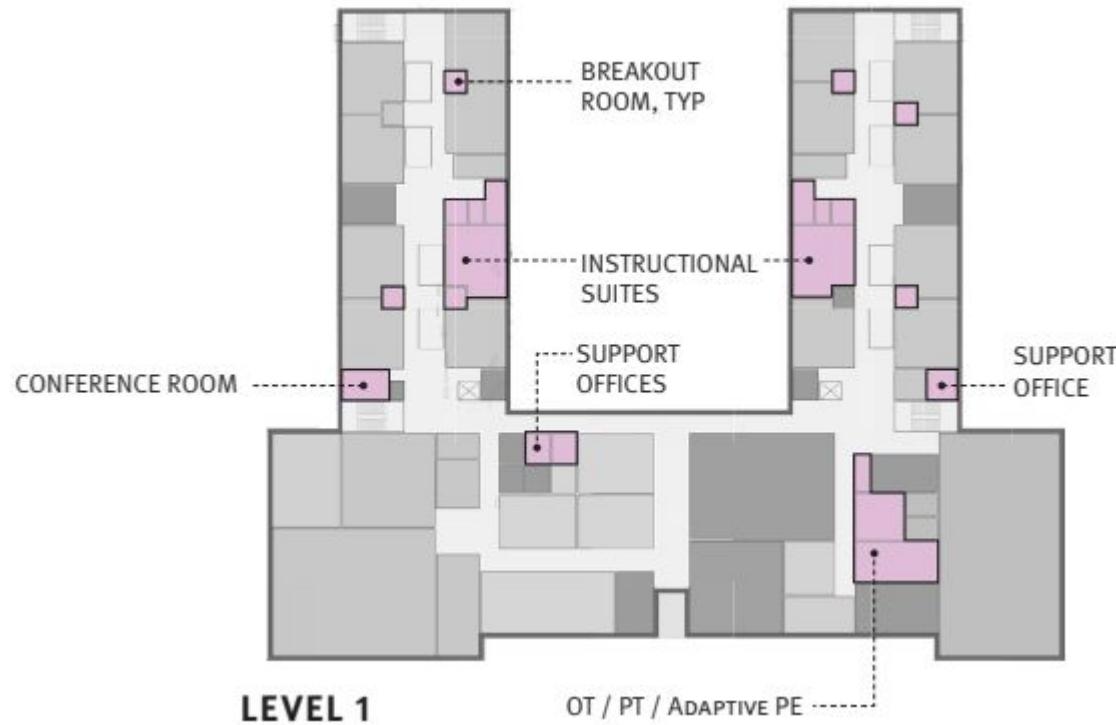
SOUTHBOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS / MARGARET A. NEARY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

DESIGN WORKING GROUP / 12 NOVEMBER 2024 /



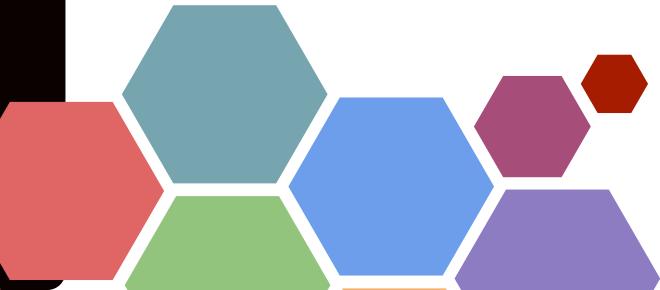
Fully Accessible and Inclusive Facilities

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.



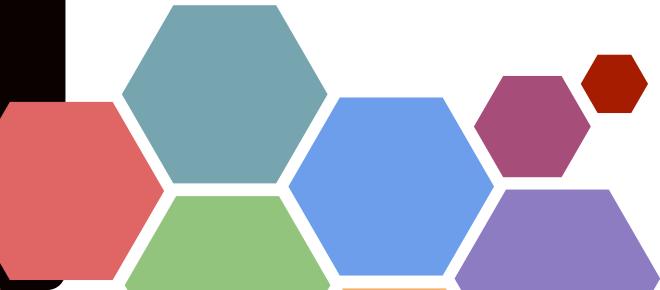
Intentionally Designed Spaces for Specialized Learning

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

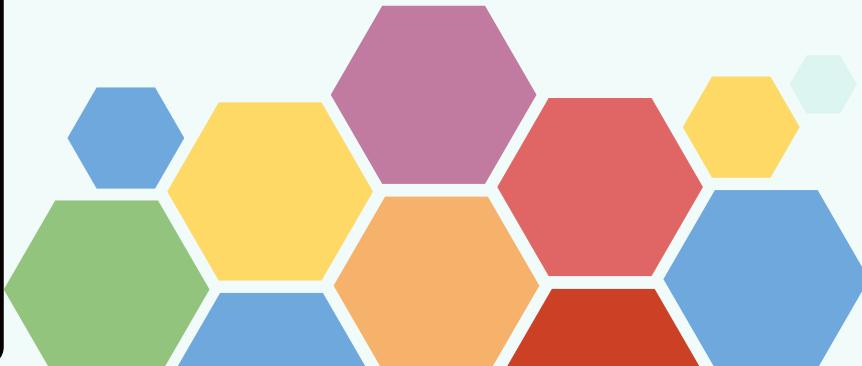


Maximization of Resources

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



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

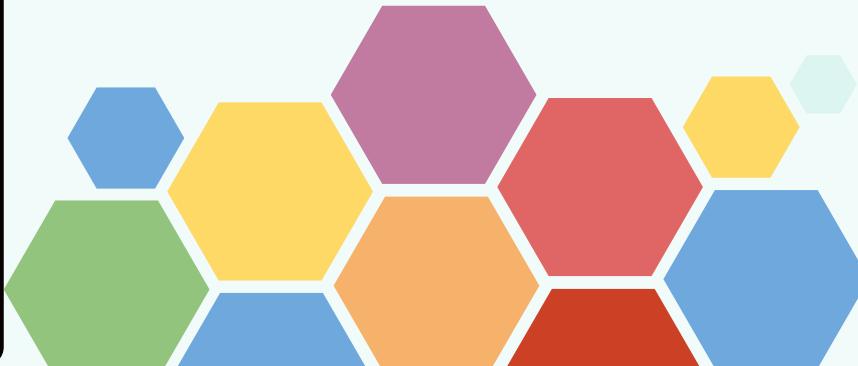
Proposed new school is substantially more efficient than current Neary School. Current Neary School (excluding Superintendent's Offices) is 201 sf per student. Proposed 4 grade school is 164 sf per student.

Future Expansion

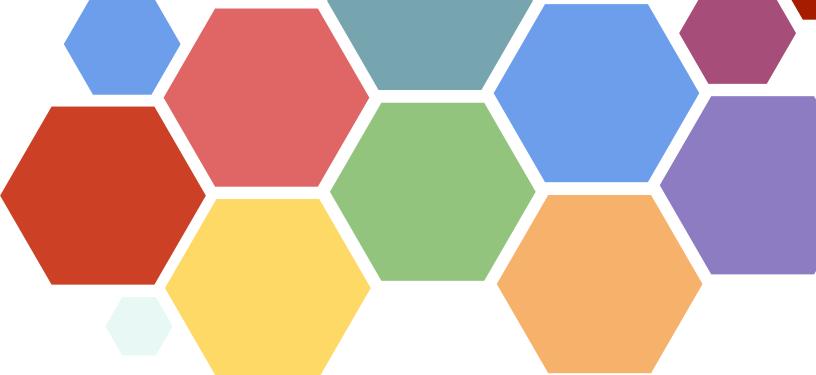
New school planned for up to 610 students. If actual student population projections exceed current projections, there is room on Neary site to expand at a later date.



Project Cost and Funding



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)
Net estimated project cost to Town	\$68,202,266

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

**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

Date of Cost Projection	Estimated Town Share of Total Project Cost
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	SITEWORK (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
Devalies 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
Neary Elementary	Southborough	June 2026	610	99,564	\$48,455,342	\$487	\$14,616,599	\$147	\$87,219,252	\$876
Fox Hill #	Burlington	Jan. 2026	325	91,000	\$47108,088	\$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

Average Cost / SF:

\$502

\$135

\$840

*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)

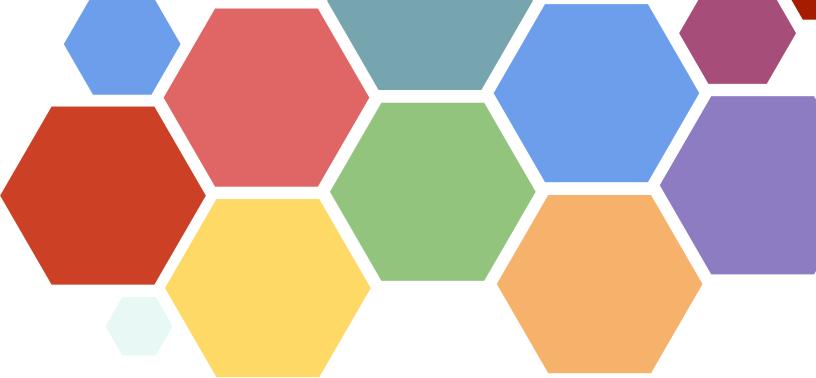
Overall Town Budget Projections with Neary Project



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

	Potential Incentives			
	Estimated Construction Cost	Sec 48 - Alternative Energy @ 34% Rate ¹	Mass Save (Path 1)	Construction Cost After Incentives
VRF	\$8,308,330	(Does Not Qualify)	\$358,455	\$7,949,875
GSHP	\$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.

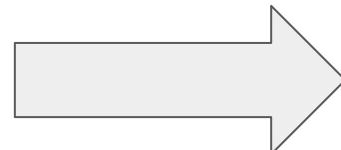
Next Steps



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



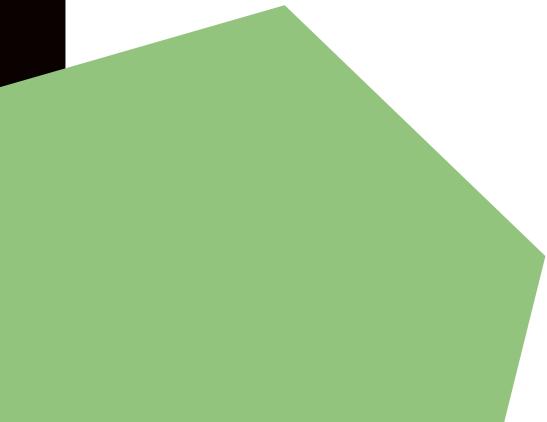
If voters approve the project at the town election, the MSBA project team would finalize the design of a new elementary school and construction would begin in the summer of 2026. The school would open in the fall of 2028.



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.

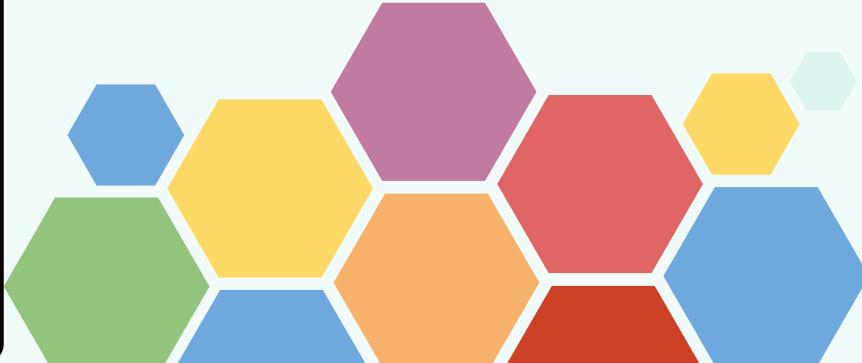
Stay Informed

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



**Thank You
Questions**

Appendix



Relocation Plan



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

