



Southborough K-8 Housing

(Very) Preliminary Findings
December 2009



It is a 2 Part Decision:

- Part 1: Are we physically able to fit the students into three schools based on space and septic issues?
- Part 2: What are the educational and long term impacts of combining into three schools such as placing 5th grade in the middle school?

Keep in mind ...

- Special Education staffing, mandates and spacing needs will continue to grow.
- Preschool needs and mandates are also on the rise.
- Enrollments are not dipping until the lower grades and again those are not dramatic.
- Just because there are empty classrooms in a school, it may not be enough to absorb a full grade.
- The Woodward School was opened in 2004 and currently houses 335 students. There are only 71 fewer students in the PreK-8 system than there were in 2004.



Current Understandings

- Splitting up grades between schools is not desirable.
- Leaving a single grade in a school is problematic.
- It is important to ensure that the mix of grades and programs is appropriate.
- **Woodward, Finn & Trottier can only be used for school purposes because the buildings were funded by MSBA funds.**



Building Constraints

- Woodward is the smallest school and is constrained by the number of classrooms.
- Trottier is the largest school but population is constrained by septic and wetland restrictions.
- Finn has potential capacity for another grade. It would likely require moving the preschool to another location.



Benchmarks of Class Sizes

Trottier septic limit: 640 students (720 total)

- Requires four consecutive grades totaling 640 or fewer students (Avg. 160 size)
- First point in time that this would be possible is the 2014/15 school year

Woodward has 20 available classrooms

- Requires two grades of 6 classes and one grade of 7 classes
- This means two grades of approximately 132 students and one grade of approximately 154 students
- There are no current groups of classes at this level



Examples of other building issues

- Capacity of cafeteria and timing of lunches
- Small group space for SPED
- Gym space for all classes
- Specialist classroom space
- Space in schools for whole school assemblies

Financial Issues

- Savings to school budget of not maintaining Neary building is approximately 175K.
- Most budgeting in the schools is based on number of students, not number of buildings.
- Art & music teachers, OT/PT, librarians and SPED teachers already travel between several schools
- Personnel savings would mostly be a few administrative and custodial positions.
- True benefit is turning over the Neary building for other town uses though the town would need to pay the building costs.
- FYI: Neary is not ADA compliant and requires asbestos abatement for major changes



Next Steps

- Consider population projections and census for beyond 2014
- Consider construction & build-out of town
- Research Part 2, the educational impacts of combining grades