

Pre-K to 8 School Building Committee – Progress Report and Comparison Matrix Overview

October 3, 2025

The Pre-K to 8 School Building Committee has worked diligently through the 2025 summer to consolidate the prior Neary Building Committee’s documentation and expand upon it. Our task has been to evaluate multiple potential school configurations for Southborough’s Pre-K through Grade 8 students and to present these options in a consistent, “apples to apples” format.

While every effort has been made to develop cost estimates that are fair representations of each option, it is important to note that these figures are best viewed as **ballpark estimates** and are primarily based on cost per square foot. A professional consultant would be required to refine any option into a full design and cost analysis. Nevertheless, the work completed provides the Town with a clear sense of scale and tradeoffs across the different approaches.

Committee Charge

The Select Board charged this ad-hoc committee with compiling a comparison matrix of potential baseline configurations (A–H). Each configuration is evaluated across sixteen criteria, including capital costs, reimbursement potential, operational impacts, safety, educational considerations, and potential domino effects. The goal is not to make a recommendation, but to ensure decision-makers and the public can weigh options confidently, with data and clear annotations.

Highlights of the Work Completed

- Compiled, catalogued, and updated documents from the Neary Building Committee.
- Developed preliminary cost estimates (renovation, addition, new construction) for multiple scenarios.
- Applied consistent escalation and soft-cost assumptions across all options.
- Considered building code requirements, energy codes, accessibility, and safety standards.
- Produced an annotated matrix to facilitate public review and discussion.
- Weighed space considerations and long-term expansion needs to ensure that each option was realistically framed against Southborough’s future enrollment and program delivery.
- Developed an Educational Considerations Matrix to equitably compare all options and their derivatives, focusing on grade alignment, space flexibility, and educational outcomes.
- The School Committee reviewed the options and voted on which scenarios best aligned with the district’s educational vision; that input is incorporated directly into the Educational Considerations Matrix.

- Completed the core 2.02_PK8_Research_Committee_Matrix_V4, which compares costs, building requirements, safety, operational, and other non-educational considerations.

Together, these tools allow for a balanced view of educational value alongside financial and logistical impacts.

Future Study Needs

The Committee emphasizes that while this progress report presents a structured comparison of options, not all scenarios may prove realistic or feasible. For example, proposed additions would require further review of site conditions such as septic system capacity and other infrastructure constraints. Additionally, each option will require more detailed vetting if pursued in the next phase of the project. At this stage, the Committee evaluated space needs at a face-value level for consistency across all options, particularly those associated with Finn, with the understanding that professional consultants will be needed to validate and refine assumptions before any final decisions are made.

Important Considerations

There could be additional site-related concerns that extend beyond the scope of this progress report. These include septic system capacity and replacement needs, groundwater management, potential environmental and air quality impacts, parking and traffic flow constraints and the costs and logistics of temporary relocation during construction. These items will require professional evaluation and should be incorporated into any next-phase feasibility study.

Committee Membership

The committee includes a mix of voting members and ex-officio members:

Chair: Beth Wittcoff

Vice Chair: Howard Anderson

Advisory Rep: Erik Glaser

Select Board Rep: Tim Fling

School Committee Rep: Laura Kauffmann

Capital Planning & Improvement Committee Rep: Stephen Holland

Resident Members: Mark Davis, Gene Karmelek, Kelly Conklin

Ex-Officio Members: Brian Ballantine, Keith Lavoie, Gregory Martineau, Steve Mucci, Rebecca Pellegrino, Mark Purple, Stefanie Reinhorn, Kathleen Valenti

Appendix A — Committee Member Observations

1. Septic Feasibility

The Neary 4-grade new build budget includes a new septic system. However, no comparable analysis has been completed for the aging septic systems at Trottier or Finn, both of which may present constraints or require replacement to support expansion. Woodward's system is the newest, but its capacity may also be limited because it is constrained with the Public Safety building and expansion under the golf course land does not seem possible due to conservation restrictions.

2. Air Quality at Finn

Finn is located approximately 350 feet from, and downgradient of, the Massachusetts Turnpike. With no modern air-handling system and an aging façade and windows, significant upgrades may be required to address potential air quality issues. EPA's **School**

Siting Guidelines https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-06/documents/school_siting_guidelines-2.pdf

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC1241798/>

3. Parking and Recreation Constraints

Finn's existing parking is limited, with overflow often occurring on public roads during larger school events. Any expansion will likely impact adjacent recreation facilities, and depending on the scope, could also affect land currently protected under Article 97. A comprehensive study of parking, traffic flow, and recreation impacts should be undertaken.

4. Groundwater Conditions

Groundwater challenges have been observed at Trottier, Finn, and Neary. While these have been managed over time, future projects should include corrective measures to ensure long-term site stability and reduce exposure risks.

5. Relocation and Temporary Facility Costs

The Neary 4-grade project budget includes provisions for temporary student relocation during construction. Comparable plans have not yet been developed for potential projects at Finn, Trottier, or Woodward. Depending on the chosen approach, temporary facilities such as portable classrooms may be required, and the associated ancillary costs may only be partially reflected within the 21.1% soft-cost allowance.

6. Wetlands

Wetland areas have been documented for the Neary 4-grade site, but no equivalent analyses have been completed for Finn or Trottier. Woodward appears to have fewer potential wetland impacts, but full environmental assessments will be needed at each site before construction.