

# Educational Plan for Joining Mattacheese Middle School And Wixon Innovation School

*Enhancing the D-Y Advantage with a Future Ready  
Educational Experience and Environment*

*Preparing our Students for their Tomorrow!*



## Our Mission

*Empowering Each Student to Achieve Excellence with Integrity  
in a Changing World*

*November 2017*

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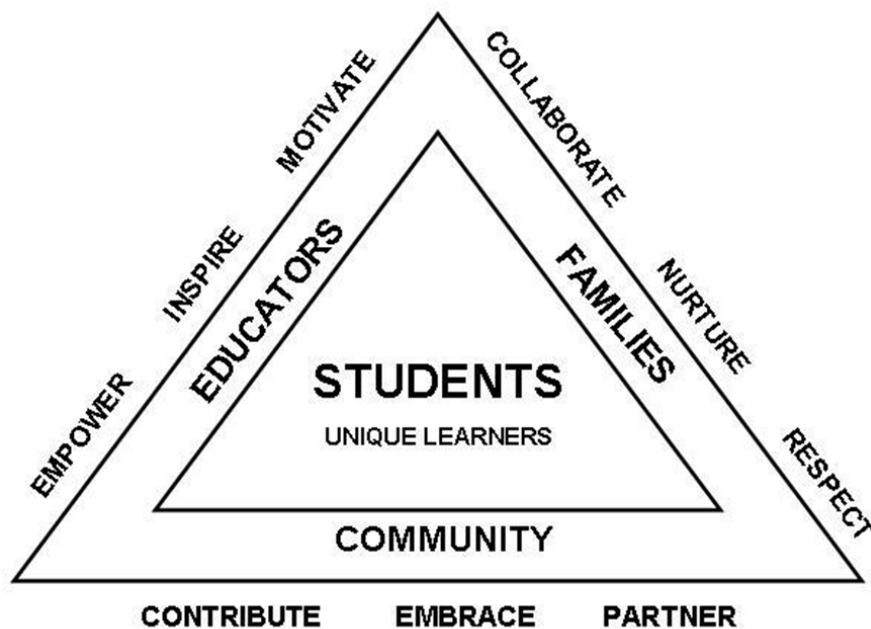
# Introduction

## VISION AND CORE VALUES

In 2014 the Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District developed the current Strategic Plan with support from the Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools. This participatory process included the School Committee, Administration, Faculty, Staff, Town Officials, Parents, Students, and the Community-at-Large. As a result of this process our Mission was re-codified as participants felt that it still represented our district's goal for all students.

Our Vision represents what our district strives for: ***The Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District, a community of learners, will be an innovative leader in preparing each student to be college, career, and civic ready, with the capacity to seek new challenges and make a positive difference.***

The triangular graphic below represents our Core Values. The steering committee spent countless hours deciding on just the right graphic. The triangle was selected because it is the strongest shape. Our students are supported in the center of the triangle by our educators, families, and the community. We have a diverse student body and we celebrate that by recognizing our students as unique learners.



Our Core Values statement: ***The Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District is a community of innovative learners. Each student will be college, career, and civic ready, empowered to seek new challenges and make a positive difference in a changing world.***

Our Mission, Vision, and Core Values are tightly interwoven creating a strong message representing who we are, how we work together, and what we will accomplish with all students. A sense of pride permeates our district as we proudly proclaim, “We are all Dolphins!” Even our mascot, the dolphin, exemplifies our long tradition of working collaboratively and caring for all students.

## **STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL STATEMENTS**

- ◆ Maintain and enhance a challenging and rigorous curriculum that empowers students to achieve success in a world community of continual change and accelerating complexity. (Student Learning-Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment)
- ◆ Maintain and enhance the tools, infrastructure and use of technology in order to meet the emerging needs of all learners. (Student Learning-Technology)
- ◆ Maintain and enhance a supportive school culture that scaffolds learning and supports a continuum of students and adult learners. (Supportive School Culture-Diverse Learners, Wellness)
- ◆ Maintain and enhance support systems for effective, proactive, and two-way communication among schools, families, and community. (Communication-Inform, Listen, Engage)
- ◆ Maintain and enhance a safe and secure environment for all students, staff, and visitors. (Safety)

## **HISTORY**

The towns of Dennis and Yarmouth have a long history of partnering to provide educational services. In the mid-1950s the two towns established the Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District. Through the regional agreement, elementary and middle school students continued to be educated in their own town and a shared high school for grades 9-12 was created. The regional high school opened in 1957. This school has been enlarged and renovated twice. It is located in the town of Yarmouth, just off the Route 6 at exit 8. This is centrally located as the district stretches from exits 7 to 9B along Route 6.

The declining student population on Cape Cod has led to a series of changes to the district over the last twelve years. Each time, changes were made to reconfigure in a way that kept students in the newest facilities and to support the changing educational needs and demands.

In 2005, the district had eight schools. Dennis and Yarmouth shared the regional high school. Dennis had two schools; one serving grades PreK-3 (Baker) and the other serving grades 4-8 (Wixon). Yarmouth had five schools; one schools housing PreK-5 (M.E. Small and one school housing K-5 (Station Avenue); two very small schools that sat on the same campus, one serving PreK-2 (MacArthur) and the other serving grades 3-5 (Simpkins); and one middle school (Mattacheese) which served grades 6-8. At the end of the 2006 school year, the John Simpkins School was closed. It was the oldest school in Yarmouth (75 years old) and it had many maintenance concerns. Due to the size of the other schools this required the rearrangement of grade levels within the Yarmouth schools. The Station Avenue and MacArthur schools became K-3 and PreK-3 respectively and M.E. Small became a school for all grade 4-5 students in Yarmouth. M.E. Small and Mattacheese were situated on the same campus, creating a similar configuration to the Wixon School (grades 4-8) in Dennis.

While we all agreed that we would have preferred our students have fewer school-to-school transitions than what had been created by having only two grades in a school, this afforded us the opportunity to get better continuity and consistency in curriculum in grades 4-5 in the Yarmouth schools. In addition, we could focus specifically on the developmental needs of our upper elementary students. We were fortunate to receive a 21<sup>st</sup> Century grant for M.E. Small, which started an exploration of longer school days and longer school year for struggling students. This led to an application to become an Innovation School and in 2011. M.E. Small became the district's first Innovation School. Through a staggered schedule for staff members, the students gained an additional 40 minutes per day of learning time resulting in approximately 19 additional days of learning time. In 2012, Baker and Wixon also became Innovation Schools. However, the Baker and Wixon Innovations did not include the longer school day.

Due to high churn rates in 2008, the School Committee voted to allow intra-district school choice. We discovered that our families were very often simply moving from one school attending area to another within our own district. Sometimes due to the challenges they were facing, students were missing significant amounts of school between leaving one school and registering in the next. So now we offer families the opportunity to stay in the school of their choice within the district. Typically, this requires that they drive their children to and from school. When they live near a bus stop or if they can get to a nearby bus stop we are able to provide bussing. This has reduced the number of students missing significant amounts of school.

Through the regional agreement, the towns maintained separate schools for grades K-8 in each town until 2013. M.E. Small housed grades 4-5 and Mattacheese housed grades 6-8 for Yarmouth students and Wixon housed grades 4-8 for Dennis. By a vote of the school

committee, it was decided to send all grade 8 students to Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High School; to make Mattacheese a district school for grades 6-7; and to make Wixon a district school for grades 4-5. After the acceptance of this change to our regional agreement at both town meetings it was possible for students in grades 4-8 to be educated in a school building in either town.

In 2014 each of the former middle schools housed about 500 students in this new grade configuration. Since M.E. Small and Wixon had been Innovation Schools, this was maintained in this transition for all grade 4-5 students under the model previously used by M.E. Small with a longer school day. Wixon remains an Innovation School with a longer school day.

This was an important vote both educationally and fiscally for the Dennis-Yarmouth students. The administrative team had a vision for improving the curriculum delivery by having all students of a grade in one school building. This configuration would provide greater opportunity for faculty to collaborate and learn together thereby ensuring a guaranteed, viable curriculum and continuity of instructional practices for all based on the state content and practice standards.

This change also provided us with an opportunity to close the smallest and next oldest PreK-3 school in Yarmouth (MacArthur) and to transfer these students to a larger facility with a real gymnasium not hindered by having to dodge Lally columns (M.E. Small) in the gymnasium during physical education classes. As a result, the district now has six schools. In Yarmouth, there is one PreK-3 school (M.E. Small), one K-3 school (Station Ave.), and Dennis has one PreK-3 school (Baker). There are three fully regionalized district schools (Wixon for grades 4-5, Mattacheese for grades 6-7, and Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High School for grades 8-12).

While this has helped us to achieve better continuity and consistency in the curriculum and instruction for grades 4-8, we are still concerned with the number of transitions students in our district must make particularly in the middle years. Our primary schools are PreK-3 or K-3 and our high school is 8-12, allowing students to spend 4-5 years in primary school and high school. We believe it would be in our students' best interest to be educated in an intermediate/middle school for grades 4-7. This configuration would create fewer transitions to better address the students' social-emotional growth in addition to their academic growth.

## Visioning

In an effort to seek input from the community the following visioning sessions were held:

- ♦ Two full-day visioning sessions that included administrators, teachers, school committee members, parents, and other interested community members;
- ♦ Three two-hour visioning sessions for parents and community member;
- ♦ Two one-hour visioning sessions for the educators who are currently working at Mattacheese and Wixon;
- ♦ Multiple discussions have taken place over the last year with the members of the building committee (17 meetings to date);
- ♦ A joint meeting of Boards of Selectmen, Finance Committees, and School Committee will take place on November 6, 2017.

Additionally, we have the added element of the current regional agreement study committee as part of the conversation. The study committee includes two members each from the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committees in each town and two School Committee members, one from Dennis and one from Yarmouth. This study committee is discussing, among other things, the two towns' interests in this building project and the possibility for a school that houses grades 4-7 for both towns.

These conversations have provided a significant amount of input from the community into this educational plan. Some of the recurring themes from all these meetings include:

- ♦ There is significant social-emotional value for children and families when students are in one building for a four-year span.
- ♦ A school of this proposed size must be designed and built to ensure that students don't feel lost and overwhelmed. They need a small school feel, but large school pride.
- ♦ It is an academically and developmentally sound practice to ensure that students in grades 4-5 and students in grades 6-7 each have a school experience that is unique to their academic and social-emotional needs. Shared spaces should allow for mentoring opportunities and academic collaboration, but the design and scheduling should ensure that each group of students' needs will be met separately.
- ♦ The location of the school is a key component for the buy-in of the parents in the two communities. A central location would be the most desirable and would help reduce the length of bus rides that students are currently experiencing in the current Wixon and Mattacheese configuration.

- ♦ The arts are core to the educational experience in Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District. An auditorium that holds the same number of audience members as the Mattacheese auditorium is a must. In addition, it would be wonderful to have a cafetorium that could be used as an additional performance space for smaller performances. Location of the proposed facility could also enhance the performance opportunities for the high school students.
- ♦ This is a community school, and as such, it should be built in a way in which the community can share some spaces after hours, but that the academic areas can be secured.

The following guiding principles and design patterns were identified as the highest priorities for the project during the visioning sessions.

### ***Guiding Principles***

- ♦ School and Community Learning Center
- ♦ Whole Child Education
- ♦ Adaptability and Evolution of Space
- ♦ Sustainability
- ♦ Small School Feel, Large School Pride
- ♦ Safety

### ***Design Patterns***

- ♦ Academic Neighborhoods
  - Neighborhood Pods
  - Functional Team Spaces
- ♦ Outdoor Learning Spaces
  - Outdoor Connections
  - Welcoming Outdoor Spaces
  - Outdoor Learning
  - Community Gathering
- ♦ Community Access
  - Community Integration
- ♦ Flexible and Agile Spaces
  - Adaptable Spaces
  - Modular Furniture
- ♦ Seamless Technology
- ♦ Common Spaces
  - Breakout Spaces
  - Kids and Adults
  - Eddies
- ♦ Transparency
  - Subtle Security
- ♦ Multi-Use Performance Spaces

# Our Students

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Most people think “vacation” when they think of Cape Cod. However, many of the people who live and work on Cape Cod year round find it a struggle to earn a living wage with its seasonal economy and dependence on the weather. As of October, 2017, 56% of the students in our district qualified for free/reduced price lunches mirroring the same at Mattacheese (60%) and Wixon (51%). Combining the statistics for these two schools, 481 students (49%) qualified for **free** lunch out of a total of 976 students. While the state uses the economically disadvantaged numbers to determine state aid, this statistic does not truly represent the needs of our population. For whatever reason, many of our families are not showing up in the other databases where they could be eligible for other kinds of state assistance.

The charts below show the percentage of each subgroup by current school configuration. The 2017 statistics are as reported on October 1, 2016. Given the transient nature of our population these statistics continue to increase throughout the school year. The numbers are always greater in June than they are in October.

| <b>Mattacheese</b>                | <b>13-14</b> | <b>14-15</b> | <b>15-16</b> | <b>16-17</b> |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>First Language Not English</b> | <b>11.3</b>  | <b>14.1</b>  | <b>15.8</b>  | <b>13.3</b>  |
| <b>English Learners</b>           | <b>8.1</b>   | <b>5.5</b>   | <b>7.4</b>   | <b>6.6</b>   |
| <b>Disabilities</b>               | <b>17.1</b>  | <b>16.3</b>  | <b>18.7</b>  | <b>19.9</b>  |
| <b>High Needs</b>                 | <b>55.0</b>  | <b>47.3</b>  | <b>51.8</b>  | <b>53.2</b>  |

| <b>Wixon</b>                      | <b>13-14</b> | <b>14-15</b> | <b>15-16</b> | <b>16-17</b> |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| <b>First Language Not English</b> | <b>13.9</b>  | <b>10.1</b>  | <b>14.0</b>  | <b>17.9</b>  |
| <b>English Learners</b>           | <b>9.6</b>   | <b>4.6</b>   | <b>7.4</b>   | <b>8.4</b>   |
| <b>Disabilities</b>               | <b>17.5</b>  | <b>17.4</b>  | <b>18.9</b>  | <b>20.4</b>  |
| <b>High Needs</b>                 | <b>52.4</b>  | <b>48.5</b>  | <b>50.3</b>  | <b>57.2</b>  |

We are proud to say that despite the challenges our students face we have made significant improvement in our graduation rates, as shown in the chart on the next page.

| 4-Year Graduation Rate for All Students |                    |                      |              |         |                      |                |
|---|--------------------|----------------------|--------------|---------|----------------------|----------------|
| Year                                    | D-Y<br>% Graduated | % Still in<br>School | D-Y<br>Total | State % | % Still in<br>School | State<br>Total |
| 2007                                    | 75.3               | 8.4                  | 83.7         | 80.9    | 6.6                  | 87.5           |
| 2008                                    | 75.5               | 7.2                  | 82.7         | 81.2    | 6.0                  | 87.2           |
| 2009                                    | 79.8               | 6.8                  | 86.6         | 81.5    | 6.2                  | 87.7           |
| 2010                                    | 79.6               | 9.0                  | 88.6         | 82.1    | 6.6                  | 88.7           |
| 2011                                    | 85.4               | 5.5                  | 90.9         | 83.4    | 6.6                  | 90.0           |
| 2012                                    | 83.7               | 6.6                  | 90.3         | 84.7    | 5.8                  | 90.5           |
| 2013                                    | 88.2               | 2.4                  | 90.6         | 85.0    | 6.1                  | 91.1           |
| 2014                                    | 84.1               | 5.6                  | 89.7         | 86.1    | 6.0                  | 92.1           |
| 2015                                    | 83.1               | 5.5                  | 88.6         | 87.3    | 5.6                  | 92.9           |
| 2016                                    | 87.9               | 5.3                  | 93.2         | 87.5    | 5.7                  | 93.2           |

## Serving Our Students

### GRADE CONFIGURATION AND CLASS SIZE POLICY

Currently, we have two schools for students in grades 4-7. Students in grades 4-5 from Dennis and Yarmouth are educated at the Wixon Innovation School in Dennis. Students in grades 6-7 are educated at the Mattacheese Middle School in Yarmouth. We believe that the developmental needs of students in grades 4-5 and grades 6-7 are unique.

We are proposing that we join these two school communities in one facility. It is our belief that being in one location will remove the feel of a major school transition between grades 5 and 6. Research tells us that transitions can increase feelings of anxiety. The longer grade span will help our students and parents feel more connected for a longer period of time. However, it is most important to us that we are able to continue to provide for the distinct needs of each population, intermediate and middle, separately while having them in one location.

When we further regionalized so that students from both towns were educated together beginning in grade 4 our district identity was enhanced. Our district identity will be strengthened by joining these two school communities. In a 4-7 school, there will be increased opportunities for student mentoring and relationship building in a larger school community. Our youngest students will have occasions to see what lies ahead without leaving their building. Our older students will develop skills necessary to take on greater responsibility and build leadership skills. We will foster our students' sense of belonging within this school. It should feel somewhat like having two schools within one building, so there is a strong individual intermediate and middle school unified under the larger school umbrella. Students will belong to their classrooms, grade levels, two-grade configuration, whole school, and district.

Combining these grade levels, we will have almost 1000 students ranging in age from 9-13 years old. Given our students social-emotional challenges and the developmental changes of this age group we want the school to feel small to the students despite its size. So it will be extremely important to have that feeling of separate, but together.

Throughout our visioning sessions with parents and community members, they echoed the desire for a longer grade span and fewer transitions. One parent stated that, “now you just get used to a school and it is time to move to the next.” However, they were also interested in making sure there is a “small school feel.” There was a special concern about students with anxiety and the need to make sure they didn’t feel overwhelmed. The use of academic neighborhoods received the highest number of votes from parents, staff, and community.

Currently, our class size policy aligns with our focus on the social emotional development of our students. We attempt to maintain class sizes of 20 students in all classes for grades 4-7, whenever possible. This would be our continued desire in our proposed school project. We believe that building relationships with students is critical to their success. These class sizes allow teachers to spend time as needed with individual students and to differentiate effectively.

As noted in the demographic tables above we have a significant number of “high needs” children and specifically, students with disabilities average 20% of the student population. In each of these schools we have complex care programs for students with multiple medical and cognitive disabilities. These students are generally placed in substantially separate classrooms with no more than 6-8 students. However, the classroom space must be able to accommodate specialized equipment as needed. General education classrooms must be large enough to include these students whenever possible because they require specialized equipment. Other substantially separate classrooms for students on the autism spectrum or who have language-based disabilities are typically in classes of no more than 10-12. These students are also included in general education but do not typically require large pieces of equipment.

All of our needs today require flexible and adaptable spaces for learning. The building needs to be able to adjust to the changing needs of students and the fluctuating educational requirements.

## **SCHEDULES**

Master schedules are revisited annually based on a myriad of factors, such as enrollment, programming needs, contractual obligations, and staffing. Currently, there are 540 students enrolled in grades 4-5 at Wixon. They receive all core content instruction in self-

contained classes. There are three teacher pairs who share two classes of students each. For example, one teaches science and math and the other teaches English and social studies for two classes of students. During the visioning sessions educators expressed a desire to have rooms together with a folding wall to allow opportunities to do more co-teaching.

In addition, each student at Wixon has the following classes; music (1X per week), library/media (1X per week), health (1X per week), art (2X per week), physical education (2X per week). We are planning to reduce the number of times per week that students take a visual art class in an effort to add a foreign language (Spanish). One of our PK-3 schools is offering Spanish and piloting a push-in delivery model. We are proposing to replicate that model for teaching Spanish in grades 4-5. We are proposing that we reduce art to 1X per week in order to add Spanish. This would extend the continuum for learning a foreign language from third grade through high school. Students in grades 4-5 have an enrichment block (3X per week) and an RTI block (2X per week). All students choose high interest enrichment blocks and all receive extra support during the RTI block based on assessment data. Students have recess daily in connection with their lunch period. It is our desire that the outdoor recreation facilities be located within easy access from the cafeteria.

Currently, there are 447 students enrolled in grades 6-7 at Mattacheese. In the core content areas, Mattacheese has five science, mathematics, and English teachers and four social studies teachers. There are four reading teachers and two mathematics teachers who provide extra support for struggling students.

The Mattacheese six hour and fifteen minute student school day operates on a six day rotation. In 2017-2018, the student day consists of a ten minute Advisory period, five (5) fifty-minute periods, one (1) forty-seven minute period (one each for 6th and 7th grade), two (2) thirty-minute lunch periods (one each for 6th grade and 7th grade) and one (1) thirty nine-minute period. There are seven periods, six of which rotate. The thirty-nine minute period remains the same every day and is the last period. This period is used as a block for a tiered system of support and Word Generation for all students. Middle school students have “fresh air” time in connection with their lunch period, further emphasizing our need for outdoor facilities located with easy access from the cafeteria. This layout supports the social-emotional and physical needs of our middle school students.

Each student at Mattacheese is scheduled individually. Students have mathematics, science, and ELA classes every day. Students have social studies every day unless the student needs additional interventions. Students who have been identified as requiring additional reading support do not take a foreign language class; otherwise foreign language is taken every day. We offer 21st Century Skills/Career Exploration, art, health, music, and instrumental lessons one day out of six. Band/Chorus/Orchestra and Word Generation each meet three days out of six. Physical education meets two days out of six.

Wixon (4-5) currently has an extended school day. The school day is six (6) hours and thirty (30) minutes. The D-Y high school has a six (6) hour and forty-two (42) minute day. Mattacheese has a six (6) hour and fifteen (15) minute day. We are proposing to extend the day at Mattacheese to at least match the day at Wixon. However, we are also exploring the possibility of extending the day to seven (7) hours for grades 4-7. With a longer school day we will have more time for core content areas and electives for enriching, interest-based learning. Our main limitation will be funding to extend the staff working day.

It is important that we give our grade 6-7 students more learning time. If the school is within a close proximity to the high school, we would bring the middle school and high school students in on a similar schedule. This would assist in expanding the middle to school to the same length as the high school day. It would also help us with the lunch schedule for the 4-7 school, because we are proposing to stagger the arrival times of 4-5 and 6-7. The staggered schedule would allow for a less congested arrival and dismissal each day, since only half the school would arrive and dismiss at one time. This would make it possible to share the cafeteria and to have lunches served at typical lunch hours. Grades 6 and 7 will have two lunch periods. Grades 4-5 will have two lunch periods. Each grade will eat on separated sides of the cafeteria and with a staggered, but overlapping schedule, so that the serving line can be managed in four waves, but effectively two seatings.

As it connects to class sizes and schedules, we are concerned about the enrollment number of 940 students allowed for this project. The chart below shows the enrollment over time using October 1 numbers in grades K-7 and advancing them from FY18-FY22. Typically, we lose about sixteen students to the charter school between grade 5 and grade 6. However, even taking that into consideration, we will still be slightly over the 940 enrollment in FY22.

If we open prior to FY22 we may be somewhat overcrowded. It is difficult to tell without actual numbers beyond FY22 whether the population moving through for these three years is just a bubble or if FY18 and FY22 are cyclical dips.

| <b>Nov. 1, 2017</b> | <b>FY18</b> | <b>FY19</b> | <b>FY20</b> | <b>FY21</b> | <b>FY22</b> |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>K</b>            | <b>209</b>  |             |             |             |             |
| <b>1</b>            | <b>231</b>  | <b>209</b>  |             |             |             |
| <b>2</b>            | <b>269</b>  | <b>231</b>  | <b>209</b>  |             |             |
| <b>3</b>            | <b>258</b>  | <b>269</b>  | <b>231</b>  | <b>209</b>  |             |
| <b>4</b>            | <b>270</b>  | <b>258</b>  | <b>269</b>  | <b>231</b>  | <b>209</b>  |
| <b>5</b>            | <b>270</b>  | <b>270</b>  | <b>258</b>  | <b>269</b>  | <b>231</b>  |
| <b>6</b>            | <b>231</b>  | <b>270</b>  | <b>270</b>  | <b>258</b>  | <b>269</b>  |
| <b>7</b>            | <b>216</b>  | <b>231</b>  | <b>270</b>  | <b>270</b>  | <b>258</b>  |
| <b>4-7 Total</b>    | <b>987</b>  | <b>1029</b> | <b>1067</b> | <b>1028</b> | <b>967</b>  |

## **SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL GROWTH**

Our desire to put these grades together to give students more school stability in the middle years supports our focus on their social-emotional growth. In each of these schools there is a full time psychologist, social worker, special education team chair, and a school nurse.

Mattacheese has two full-time school counselors who focus on developing 21<sup>st</sup> century life skills and school-to-careers interest, in addition to providing support for personal development. For students and families who may need a greater level of assistance, we partner with Gosnold of Cape Cod to bring counselors to the school during the day. The Gosnold counselors are adept at treating a range of mental health issues, including the prevention and treatment of addiction. At Wixon and Mattacheese Gosnold counselors are available for students on a daily basis. Therefore, small counseling spaces need to be provided in an area that ensures privacy. Throughout the year Gosnold counselors conduct workshops for parents of middle school students.

The issues of poverty and addiction significantly impact the lives of our students. We have done a great deal of work with our faculty around helping traumatized children learn. We focus on health and wellness. Beginning in kindergarten, we utilize a mindfulness curriculum to assist our students with strategies to deal with anxiety. Our teachers teach executive functioning skills within the classroom to help students learn to organize and become successful learners. Every school fosters the development of appropriate behavior through Positive Behavioral Supports and Interventions (PBIS). This is a direct approach for teaching expected behaviors as prevention. It is based on the belief that if students knew what was expected, they would do it. Direct teaching of expectations ensures all students are able to be successful.

## **STUDENT SUPPORT**

### ***Special Education***

Our inclusion teachers co-teach classes, thus providing two adults in a classroom with 20 students. This “push-in” model has been most successful with a large majority of our special education students who need some support but not a substantially separate setting. It is important to have some adjacent spaces that allow for small flexible groupings. We propose that the inclusion teachers share a larger room that is divided into individual workspace for them to complete paperwork and make phone calls. General education classrooms would be greatly enhanced for our students if sound amplification systems were installed. We currently have only a couple of portable Redcat amplification systems. We move them around as needed, but it would enhance the educational experience of all students if such systems were part of every classroom.

## ***Specialized Programs for Students with Learning Differences***

### ***Students Achieving Improved Learning Strategies - SAILS***

“SAILS” is a self-contained classroom available to students in grades four and five. It is currently located in the Wixon Innovation School, but we will need space in grades six and seven as students age up. This classroom responds to the needs of students with intellectual impairments and/or language base needs who are unable to access grade level curriculum without accommodations and need to have material presented at a developmental level commensurate with their abilities. They provide small group instruction and a small student to staff ratio, consistent with strategies designed to promote academic success.

Students in this program have Individualized Educational Plans which address their diverse learning styles and specific needs. All students are encouraged and given the opportunity to mainstream for academic and non-academic classes where appropriate. The SAILS classroom is staffed with a certified special education teacher as well as with educational support personnel to facilitate academic instruction.

### **Program Philosophy**

The goal of the SAIL classroom is to assist students in developing skills that will enable them to be successful in school as well as provide them with the real life skills necessary for daily living. Safe, predictable, and positive environments are provided to enhance the student’s learning process and encourage student participation and motivation. Alternative resources and learning tools are provided to address the student’s individual needs and to support the classroom’s goal. In addition, the focus is on developing a positive social atmosphere to promote the students’ ability to work collaboratively and productively in a respectful and pro-social manner. The SAILS program works directly with a variety of related service providers to assist students in the areas of Speech and Language, Occupational and Physical therapists.

### **Participation in the General Education Classroom**

Students’ re-entry to general classrooms or mainstreaming occurs when it has been determined by the team that the student has developed the ability to comply with school rules and regulations, and is capable of learning within the general education environment. Typically, students are transitioned into one general education class at a time to promote a successful outcome. The program staff works closely with the mainstream teachers to facilitate a smooth transition and to monitor the student’s progress. In addition, the program staff is available to provide curriculum support in the mainstream classroom. Additional mainstream classes are added when students have demonstrated consistent and positive behavior within their classes. When students reach the goal of full mainstreaming, supportive services are progressively diminished.

### ***Specialized Teaching Alternative Room (STAR) II***

STAR II is a self-contained classroom available to students in grades four and five. It is currently located at the Nathaniel H. Wixon Innovation School. We will need a similar classroom in grades six and seven as the students grow. This classroom responds to the needs of students with autism, or pervasive developmental delays. They provide small group instruction and a small student to staff ratio, consistent with strategies designed to promote academic and social success.

Students in these programs have Individualized Educational Plans which address their diverse learning styles and specific communication needs. All students are encouraged and given the opportunity to mainstream for academic and non-academic classes where appropriate. The STAR II classroom is staffed with a certified special education teacher as well as with educational support personnel, to facilitate academic and behavior instruction. A licensed Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) provides consultation to staff and individual treatment to students in the program.

### **Program Philosophy**

The goal of the STAR II classroom is to assist students in developing communication and advocacy skills that will enable them to be successful in school as well as provide them with daily living skills. Safe, predictable, and positive environments are provided to enhance the student's learning process and encourage student participation and motivation. Alternative resources and learning tools are provided to address the student's individual needs and to support the classroom's goal. In addition, the program design is focused on developing a positive social atmosphere to promote the students' ability to work collaboratively and productively in a respectful and pro-social manner.

The STAR II program works directly with a variety of related service providers to assist students in the areas of Speech and Language, Occupational and Physical therapists. We welcome families and strive to allow parents to participate in the educational and socialization process utilizing their unique knowledge of the problems affecting their child. Communication is integral to the program and success of students.

### **Participation in the General Education Classroom**

Students' re-entry to general classrooms or mainstreaming occurs when it has been determined that the student has developed the ability to comply with school rules and regulation, and is capable of learning within the general education environment. Typically, students are transitioned into one general education class at a time to promote a successful outcome. The program staff works closely with the mainstream teachers to facilitate a smooth transition and to monitor the student's progress. In addition, the program staff is

available to provide curriculum support in the mainstream classroom. When students reach the goal of full mainstreaming, supportive services are progressively diminished.

### **Behavior Support Classroom**

The Behavior Support classroom is self-contained. It is available to students in grades six and seven. The classroom is located at the Mattacheese Middle School. With increasing social-emotional issues we are exploring the development of a similar program for grades four and five. The classroom responds to the needs of students dealing with a variety of behavioral, social, and academic issues. Students in the behavior support classroom receive small group instruction and benefit from a small student to staff ratio. Teachers use strategies designed to promote cooperative learning and social/ emotional growth. Each student in the classroom has an Individualized Educational Plan which addresses their diverse learning styles and specific needs. All students are encouraged and given the opportunity to mainstream for both academic and non-academic classes where appropriate. Students who are mainstreamed are provided with academic and behavioral support to enhance their success. This classroom is staffed with a certified special education teacher as well as with educational support personnel to facilitate academic instruction and behavior management.

The middle school is staffed with two school counselors, a social worker, and a school psychologist, who are available to provide individual and group therapy and crisis intervention for student, as well as behavioral consultation to the teaching staff. In addition, an integral component of the social worker's responsibilities is to maintain regular communication with parents and any outside service providers deemed appropriate.

### **Program Philosophy**

The goal of the behavior support classroom is to assist students in developing skills that will enable them to be successful in less restrictive learning environments. Safe, predictable, and positive environments are provided to enhance the student's learning process and encourage student participation and motivation. Alternative resources and learning tools are provided to address the student's individual needs and to support classroom goals. In addition, the focus is on developing a positive social and behavior climate in order to promote the students' ability to work collaboratively and productively in a respectful and pro-social manner. The program works directly with a variety of related service providers to assist students in the areas of Speech and Language, Occupational and Physical therapists.

### **Behavior Management**

Behavior management systems are an integral component of the behavior support classroom and are designed to support each student's individual and social goals; as well as

the program's goal to provide a safe, consistent, and predictable learning environment. Expectations for appropriate and responsible behavior and classroom routines are clearly delineated. Incentives planned by the program staff with the student input are provided to reinforce pro-social and respectful behavior, while consequences to problematic behavior exist to maintain the classroom's atmosphere of safety and respect for all adults and students involved.

In the event that the student's behavior becomes disruptive to the class or becomes aggressive in any manner, the student will be asked to leave the classroom and take a time out in a designated area. All attempts will be made to support the student's efforts at taking a time out appropriately. In the event that a student's behavior poses a safety threat to self or other and all other behavior management techniques have been exhausted, it may be necessary to provide physical intervention and restraint. All program staff is trained in the Crisis Prevention Institute's (CPI) non-violent crisis intervention methods.

A primary component of the behavior management system is to assist students in their ability to process problematic behavioral incidents. Following any incident that warrants a time out, students with staff assistance, will be required to process the incident and determine steps they might take in the future to handle the situation in a more appropriate manner.

### **Participation in the General Education Classroom**

Students' re-entry to general classrooms or mainstreaming occurs when the parents and staff determine that the student has developed the ability to comply with school rules and regulations, and is capable of learning within the general education environment. Typically, students are transitioned into one general education class at a time to promote a successful outcome. The program staff works closely with the mainstream teachers to facilitate a smooth transition and to monitor the student's progress. In addition, the program staff is available to provide curriculum support in the mainstream subject. Mainstream classes are added when students have demonstrated consistent and positive behavior within their classes. When students reach the goal of full mainstreaming, supportive services are progressively diminished.

### ***NECC Partner Program***

The Partner Program is a cooperative classroom supported by The New England Center for Children (NECC) and the Dennis-Yarmouth School District. The Partner Program is an intensive instructional program based on the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis. Students receive one-to-one instruction provided by a Certified Applied Behavior Analysis Assistant who implements individualized curricula and behavior plans for each student,

and is supervised by a Master's level certified special education teacher trained in Applied Behavior Analysis. This program currently serves 10-16 year old students.

In addition, a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) consults to the classroom weekly. The program, which is a full year program, consists of five six-hour and thirty- five-minute classroom days, with the opportunity for two hours of home training weekly. The majority of the students' skill acquisition programs are implemented during structured teaching sessions in the Partner Program classroom. However, students also attend general education classes for social opportunities.

While in the Partner Program classroom, students work in a separate "cubby" area as well as in the general classroom area. Students also join their classmates to practice skills in the context of small group lessons. The primary area of focus for students in the Partner Program is to increase independence with academic, self-help, social, and motor skills, in order to bring their skill sets closer to that of their age-matched peers. Other significant areas of focus are decreasing maladaptive behavior in the school setting, enhancing students' abilities to interact with peers, and the generalization of mastered skills to less restrictive settings.

Each of the aforementioned programs (SAILS, STAR II, Behavior Support, and NECC) will require their own separate classroom spaces and adjacencies for daily life skills and therapies. This will provide a significant improvement for our students and their programming.

### ***Therapists***

Each school provides speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy and services for our visually impaired students. Speech Pathologists typically service small groups of students at a time or "push-in" to the classroom for some students. The Occupational Therapist and Physical Therapist could share a very large room that would hold all the necessary equipment. They would be able to service small groups of students at a time in that room. The services for the visually impaired are on an as-needed basis with a district-wide teacher. Therefore, the equipment for the visually impaired could be in the same room as the OT/PT equipment along with a desk for this teacher.

### ***English Learners***

As noted above, our population includes English learners. Each school has students at every EL level 1-5 as measured by ACCESS testing. These students vary in their needs for English Language instruction based on federal and state guidelines. To meet these guidelines, students must be in a substantially separate setting for their English instruction. Each school has two teachers to provide the necessary services. They typically serve up to

5-10 students at a time, but this is extremely fluid. In order to meet these diverse needs, it would be ideal to have smaller rooms, two for each grade level (4 in total) or two larger rooms that could be flexibly partitioned based on relevant groupings; one large room for grades 4-5 and one for grades 6-7. We have four teachers and this population is continuing to grow.

### ***Reading and Mathematics Support***

At both schools, we provide reading instruction for struggling students who are not on an individualized educational plan but are reading below grade level. Each school has three to four reading teachers. Class sizes range from 3-14 students. For grades 4-5 there should be two full-sized rooms that can be divided into four half-size classrooms. For grades 6-7 the same configuration is needed. Right now, all teachers in grades 6-7 teach in a very large room with portable dividers. This is less than ideal, acoustically, for the educational programs used.

At Mattacheese, students who are struggling in math receive support in mathematics. These students have math for an extra block each day. Class sizes range from 10-14 students. One full-sized classroom that can be divided into two half-size classrooms are needed.

Larger rooms that could be flexibly divided would serve the changing needs of the school population rather than many small rooms. Rooms must be designed to control the noise level. The students accessing these spaces typically have greatest difficulty attending to instruction.

### ***Health Clinic***

We envision the health clinic to be part of the building's core. Each school currently has one full-time nurse and a nurse suite. We propose having one nurse suite with two nurses. They will need adequate space and privacy to do physicals and screenings while servicing the needs of students who become ill or need daily medication. In particular, grade 7 students will be screened using SBIRT: Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment as required by the state as part of the opioid risk reduction efforts. Privacy is extremely important to this effort.

We offer dental checkups and cleanings for students through Forsyth Dental. We need adequate space adjacent to the clinic or within the clinic for them to set up and conduct these services.

There must be adequate space to store equipment, such as wheelchairs and other medical equipment. We would recommend at least four bathrooms and one shower. There needs to be at least eight beds that can be private. A small conference room adjacent to the clinic would allow nurses to meet with parents, students, and staff in a private area.

We need two adequately sized medicine safes for storing medicines. We would use two safes, one for grades 4-5 and one for grades 6-7, to ensure ease for dispensing and for safety.

Each nurse would need a desk and a computer for record keeping. We would like some displays for educational literature for students, teachers, and families.

The clinic needs to be easily accessible to parents and families coming to pick up their child, to see the nurse for medication drop off, or other matters.

### ***Lunch***

Currently, Wixon has four lunches per day and is proposing to move to two. Mattacheese has two lunch periods and would like that to continue. Both schools currently have a full service kitchen that we would like maintained. We would like to have adjacent outdoor space for students to use when they have finished their lunch.

### ***Restrooms/Locker Rooms***

We are sensitive to the needs of our LGBTQ students. Therefore, we would like consideration given to how best to set up restrooms and locker rooms to support all students. It probably goes without saying that all facilities would be ADA compliant and the same consideration needs to be given to all diverse student needs. Currently, we are not set up for these needs and that is a definite area of improvement.

## **SPECIALIZED CLASSES**

### ***Physical Education and Health***

Currently there are two physical education teachers at Mattacheese and two at Wixon. We currently have two gymnasiums at Wixon and one at Mattacheese that includes a full size gym and elevated areas that are teaching spaces. The elevated areas consist of stationary bikes and recreational activities such as ping pong. We will need at least two gymnasiums in a combined school for our schedules to work. Given our complex care students who have wheelchairs and adaptive equipment there must be an adaptive equipment gymnasium, so that the appropriate equipment can be consistently available. It is critical to have this adaptive physical education space as we do not have such a space currently.

Each school has one health teacher in their own classroom. We will maintain this in the new building so at least two classrooms will be needed for health classes.

Grade 6-7 students change for physical education. Therefore, we would recommend a locker room with lockers large enough for their backpacks and clothes. The locker rooms

need private changing spaces and restrooms. Students in grades 4-5 will not need a locker room.

### **Physical Education Space Needs**

- ♦ Locker rooms with medium size lockers for student storage
- ♦ Only one shower connected with each physical education office is needed (2 showers total)
- ♦ Office in each locker room for PE teachers with private bathroom including shower.
- ♦ Basketball Court
- ♦ Gymnastic Equipment area (currently on elevated platform)
- ♦ Fitness room for stationary bikes and treadmills (currently on elevated platform)
- ♦ Bleacher area at least 10 rows high. (length of basketball court)
- ♦ Equipment Storage closet for both PE Department and Separate closet for Athletic Department.
- ♦ Field use for PE Classes: Soccer Field, Field Hockey Field, Football field (used as a second soccer field) Track and Field Area, Softball Field
- ♦ Outside storage bin for bicycles, hurdles, track equipment

### ***Visual Arts***

Currently we have one art teacher at Mattacheese and two at Wixon. We would reverse this by increasing the number of art teachers to two at grades 6-7 so that we can offer a more extensive elective program for our middle school students. This will prepare them for the high school program in which students are annually recognized by the Boston Globe with Gold Keys, Silver Keys, and Honorable Mentions. This interest and skill development begins at the elementary, intermediate, and middle school levels. There are two teaching spaces currently at Wixon and one at Mattacheese. We would need two spaces for Mattacheese, but would reduce the number of art sections for grades 4-5. We will continue these programs and build on them in the future.

### ***Music/Performing Arts***

The arts are an important part of a well-rounded education. Our students are very fortunate for the support of the community with our visual and performing arts programs. Dennis-Yarmouth is well-known for its music programs with our high school band earning state championships several years in a row and recently a New England Championship.

**This is not an extra in our district.** Approximately one third of our students are involved in our music programs. Wixon and Mattacheese each have three music teachers; one for choral music, one for band, and one for orchestra. In addition, we have a theater arts

program at each of these schools. Students put on plays and musicals 2-3 times per year at each level.

The music rehearsal spaces need to be away from the academic areas or soundproofed so they don't interfere with student concentration in academic classrooms. It would be ideal if they could about a sizable auditorium. Mattacheese is fortunate enough to have a set of steel drums. A teaching space for this unique resource is also needed.

Our concerts and plays/musicals typically draw standing room only crowds. Currently, the Mattacheese auditorium seats about 757 and the Wixon auditorium seats about 550. It is important to continue to have a good-sized auditorium for crowds of up to 750. It would be helpful if there was location near the entrance for a ticket sales booth. Students in middle school sell the tickets to their shows at the door and this would enhance that experience for them.

Parents, members of our community, and several public officials talked extensively about the need for a full auditorium at the visioning sessions and at our building committee meetings. They realize that this is not a reimbursable expense; however, they will advocate for a full auditorium in the community.

Performing arts bring our community together. Last year our middle school students put on a performance of Lion King Junior. It was outstanding and brought in standing room only crowds and a great deal of community support. These performances might be something extra for some school districts, but here the arts are part of the core program. We have many senior citizens that live in our community with no children in our schools that see the advertisements for concerts and plays on our school sign and then attend. We frequently receive emails and letters with compliments for our students and our schools' performing arts programs.

During visioning and at building committee meetings people supported the idea of the cafetorium as an added performing arts teaching and performance space for smaller presentations. However, they felt it would be a tremendous mistake not to have a full-sized auditorium, too. Finally, they noted that the only other place in the district to have such events is the high school. Unfortunately, while the high school was renovated around 2006 the auditorium could not be expanded due to its location within the building. The high school auditorium has 487 seats. If the intermediate/middle school is located on the same campus, the high school students may be able to use the intermediate/middle school auditorium for some of their performances. The high school band is so large that the only way they can play in the auditorium is to break the group up into two smaller bands or play

in the gym. The acoustics in the gym don't do them justice. We don't want a full-sized auditorium because it is nice to have. We really use it and need it.

A school store near the auditorium (or in the main corridor for the public) is greatly needed as all schools sell spirit wear items. Our middle school students do the sales in their current school store. This is another opportunity for our students to practice life skills at a young age and they really enjoy it.

### ***World Languages***

Currently we offer three languages at Mattacheese: Spanish, German, and French. Therefore, we need three teaching spaces for grades 6-7. We are developing a plan to offer Spanish to all students in grades K-5. We have Spanish in one PreK-3 school where we are exploring a push-in model. As mentioned previously we would trade one art class for a Spanish class at grades 4-5 to provide a foreign language opportunity K-12. In this model only one teaching space with adequate storage would be needed along with a fully-equipped "classroom on wheels" that would include audio/visual equipment and a variety of portable instructional resources to take this learning opportunity into the classrooms when appropriate. Children learn language best if they have these experiences every day in shorter blocks of time.

### ***Technology***

We are a 1:1 iPad district. Currently all students in grades 4-12 have their own iPads. In grades 4-5, iPads are left in school and stored on carts. Students in grades 6-12 are allowed to take them home.

We have just received the results of the 2017 spring state testing and all students at Mattacheese took the tests on their iPads. We were able to test the whole grade level at once. At Wixon, we also tested the grade 4 students using their iPads. They tested in clusters of 4-5 classrooms at a time. Next year we will test all grade 5 students using iPads. Our plan is to test all of grade 4 at one time and all of grade 5 at one time. We have also tested grade 3 students using iPads in two schools. In FY18 all students in grades 3-7 will take the state tests using their iPads. By 2019 all students in our district will complete the state testing using iPads.

Every classroom in the district has a Smartboard and all our buildings have a wireless infrastructure. In all classrooms teachers have a desktop computer. In order to provide a blended learning environment, it is necessary to have a small bank of at least five computers in each classroom. Mattacheese has two full computer labs and Wixon has one full computer lab. It is necessary to continue to have one lab for grades 4-5 and at least one

for grades 6-7 so that it is possible for whole classes to work on computers simultaneously. These computer labs need to be located within or adjacent to the library. Currently, the Wixon lab is located in the library and the Mattacheese labs are not located in or adjacent to the library. In order to promote efficiency and cost effectiveness, printers and copiers should be shared by a group of 4-5 classrooms.

In our visioning sessions educators indicated the need for technology to work throughout the building. We often talk about the students' iPads as the pencil of today and so much more. The technology should support the walls in classrooms as teaching spaces. We provide significant support for the use of technology in our district. We have a Technology Director, an Instructional Technology Assistant Director, and four technicians. These technology specialists are currently located at the Mattacheese Middle School and will need a large work space including room for repair and secure storage, in the new building.

### ***Library Media Center***

In both schools, librarians are certified library media specialists. Every librarian teaches the technology curriculum based on the state standards. In grades 4-5 whole classes of students come to the library for 45 minute classes. In grades 6-7 the library is used more as a resource and the librarian and technology coach support teachers in the library, in the computer lab, and in the classroom. Our librarians in grades 4-7 teach things topics such as coding and research skills during the library period. Currently, at Mattacheese we have a green screen and do some studio production in connection with the library. At both Mattacheese and Wixon there is a Technology Coach who can teach direct lessons to students, provide professional development to teachers, and support the use of technology in the classroom.

Ideally, we would like our library to be connected to the computer labs. The library needs to be large enough to accommodate at least two classes at once. We envision the two librarians working together to serve grades 4-7. We would like the library to offer a variety of flexible spaces including a makerspace/robotics lab and a video production area.

We are doing more and more project-based learning that requires our students to have space to work, to store projects as they are working on them, and space to display their completed work. We propose these project-based learning spaces be incorporated into this project.

### ***21<sup>ST</sup> Century Skills Classes***

There are classroom spaces needed for the middle school 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills/Career Exploration classes taught by the school counselors. This curriculum teaches students the essential skills to be successful in all classes and enhances personal/social, academic/careers awareness skills. Flexible classroom spaces are needed for collaborative learning experiences.

## **TEACHING METHODOLOGY AND STRUCTURE**

### ***Mathematics***

The goals of the mathematics curriculum in Dennis-Yarmouth are to:

- ♦ provide rigorous higher level mathematics to all students;
- ♦ align with the Next Generation Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System which includes all the principles and goals outlined in the state adopted frameworks;
- ♦ provide a coherent, connected and comprehensive curriculum Pre K-12;
- ♦ prepare all students for higher level mathematics courses for grades 11 and 12; and
- ♦ reflect the most informed and current approaches to mathematics instruction.

Our goals are anchored in the principles stated in “Principles to Action: Ensuring Mathematical Success for All (2014)”. One principle that is in the forefront for Dennis-Yarmouth is the following:

Access and Equity- An excellent mathematics program requires that all students have access to high quality mathematics curriculum, effective teaching and learning, high expectations and the support and resources needed to maximize learning potential.

Currently, the teaching of mathematics in Dennis-Yarmouth incorporates rigorous mathematics resources that are implemented in an inclusive setting. The teacher is no longer the authoritarian figure standing in front of the classroom. A variety of instructional groupings are employed: whole group, small group, independent work. Students are encouraged to work collaboratively with each other and share their work with each other. Students are expected to engage in meaningful respectful conversation with each other, as well as with the teacher, about math concepts and procedures. These conversations deepen their own understandings as they clarify their own thinking and learning. Students should be able to justify their conclusions, communicate them to others, and respond to the argument of others.

A strategy-based approach to learning is used to encourage higher order thinking from all students. Math concepts and skills are taught through problem based activities. Lessons are based on approximately 60 minute blocks. A variety of manipulatives, tools, and representations are used throughout the students' years of education.

The implementation of technology has transformed and continues to transform the mathematics classroom and learning. There are interactive learning tools, videos, internet searches, digital curriculum, and programs/apps that encourage students to interact, collaborate, and communicate with their peers.

There are computer-based math learning programs ready to support the learning of all types of math learners. However, these programs will never replace a highly effective teacher in the classroom. In grades 6 & 7, students in need of math support outside of the math classroom are provided with an additional class instructed by a mathematics teacher. The goals of the class are to fill in gaps from prior years and support the students in mastering the current year's standards. Appropriate technology tools are necessary to support the individualized learning of each student.

Proposed changes to strengthen and deepen our students' learning of mathematics include the following:

- ◆ In order to effectively implement a variety of instructional groupings, furniture should easily move to reconfigure different groups.
- ◆ In order for students to effectively use a variety of manipulatives and hands-on activities, ample space should be provided so that students can spread out.
- ◆ In order to safely store and secure a variety of manipulatives and representations for the teaching and learning of mathematics, safe, ample and secure storage space is critical.
- ◆ In order to expand and strengthen our digital learning component of our curriculum, classrooms should be equipped with computers for student use that would allow for blended learning and additional tools for problem solving (i.e., visualization, simulation, modeling, charting, etc.)

### ***Science***

The field of science is continuously changing. To prepare our students for success in college, career, and civic life, all students must understand the world around them. They must understand how parts of a whole interact with each other and their effects on the outcomes of a complex system. Students learn to make judgements based on analyzing and

evaluating evidence and interpreting and drawing conclusions based on this analysis. Students learn to identify and ask questions that clarify different points of view. In our revised 2016 science standards, the addition of inquiry and design skills will support our students in these learning endeavors.

Currently, science lessons in grades 4 & 5 are based on an average of 35 minutes per day and 47 minutes per day for grades 6 & 7. In grades 4 & 5 teachers implement science lessons within their classroom and, in addition, utilize a science lab for lessons involving hands-on inquiry-based lessons. Currently in grades 6 & 7, science classrooms combine the lab component within the classroom.

Proposed changes to strengthen and deepen our students' learning of mathematics include the following:

- ♦ The science classroom should afford students the capability of exploring and experimenting with a wide variety of materials both real and virtual. Teachers implement hands-on, inquiry-based science and engineering curriculum that requires flexible space within the classroom. Classrooms should have the space to accommodate whole group discussions as well as working in pairs, groups, and independently. Students should have the opportunity to reflect on their ideas, collect evidence, make inferences and predictions and discuss their findings. These are all crucial to growth in understanding. (2016 Massachusetts Science and Technology/Engineering Framework)
- ♦ In addition to classroom space, well provisioned labs are required for hands-on, inquiry-based activities that require a safe space and storage for science materials and supplies. These labs allow students to design investigations, engage in scientific reasoning, manipulate equipment, record data, analyze results, and discuss their findings. The space should be flexible and avoid built-ins.
- ♦ Technology should be everywhere in the science classroom and labs. The consistent use of technology allows students to research, practice, and present information. Technology supports the collection of data, visualization of abstract phenomena, and simulations of experiments. Our current global education work (GSTEM Global Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) at the high school includes frequent real time visual communication and collaborative work with students in other countries, and we intend to implement this program at the middle school level as well.

### ***English Language Arts***

The English Language Arts curriculum is based on the current MA Curriculum Frameworks for ELA and Literacy. Priority standards have been identified based on endurance, leverage, and readiness to ensure that all students have ample opportunity and exposure to maximize proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The curriculum places a heavy emphasis on 21<sup>st</sup> century learning goals, including analytic reasoning, reading to find evidence, and exploring multiple perspectives on complex problems in order to deepen one's own understanding. Units of study are designed utilizing the Understanding by Design framework of standards-based instruction and are centered on high quality literature and informational text. Current research points to the value of discussion and debate in increasing reading comprehension, especially for struggling readers, by incorporating academic vocabulary to engaging texts and providing ample opportunities for discussion and debate.

In our K-5 classrooms, teachers utilize the Literacy Collaborative framework of literacy instruction which includes the use of Interactive Read Aloud, Guided Reading flexible grouping, Reading and Writing Workshop, and Independent Reading. The district uses the Word Generation curriculum resource in grades 4-8 to supplement instruction for all students. This interdisciplinary approach for teaching academic vocabulary to students includes student-led discussion and debate. Students deepen not only their vocabulary but their reading comprehension through consideration and discussion of varied perspectives on pertinent, timely real-world issues. In all classes, varied modes of instruction are employed to allow multiple access points to the curriculum- whole class, small group, individual, partner work, etc. Local and state assessment data is utilized to identify those students in need of further interventions for reading comprehension, fluency, and phonics. Supplemental classes are created based on that need so students can acquire the necessary skills to be successful in their core academics.

Proposed Changes to strengthen and deepen our students' literacy skills include the following:

- ♦ Large, open space which allows for flexible grouping within the classroom;
- ♦ Flexible space for small-group instruction adjacent to the classroom;
- ♦ Adequate storage for a classroom library and individual student bins;
- ♦ Sufficient available wall space to display anchor charts, student exemplars, and student thinking;
- ♦ Access to technology to allow students to research, practice, and present information.

## ***Social Studies***

The Social Studies curriculum is based on the 2003 MA Curriculum Frameworks for History and Social Science. When the frameworks were adopted, the district decided to blend the Grade 6 World Geography standards with the Grade 7 Ancient and Classical Civilizations of the Mediterranean standards by creating a concept-based model of instruction which includes the following: People, Places, and Environments; Culture and Identity; Power and Participation; Time, Continuity, and Change; Science, Technology, and Society; and Production and Distribution. Curriculum Team Leaders used the Understanding by Design framework of unit development to plan units of study. Each unit has one performance task designed to incorporate the priority standards and identified core concepts to allow students to synthesize their learning. Teachers utilize the variety of resources- textbooks, maps and atlases, primary documents, videos and apps, and other informational texts to supplement instruction. Grades 4 and 5 have a similar focus by studying the geography and early history of North America. Because history is primarily a study of the past in order to inform the present and prepare for the future, teachers strive to make connections to the current real world students are living in. Social Studies provides a perfect opportunity for hands-on, project based learning as students learn about the world around them.

Proposed Changes to strengthen and deepen our students' knowledge and skills include the following:

- ♦ Sufficient space is needed to maintain “works in progress” so that student projects can be stored safely over an extended period of time. This would minimize the time spent on setting up and breaking down projects during each working period, thus making the most of available instructional minutes;
- ♦ Collaboration, discussion, and inquiry based learning is the cornerstone of high quality instruction so there needs to be space provided for students to work together with limited interruption or disruption by neighboring groups;
- ♦ Access to technology to allow students to research, practice, and present information.

## **OUTDOOR LEARNING AND RECREATION SPACES**

Throughout our district there is a focus on healthy choices. This includes physical activities and healthy eating. It is important for both intermediate and middle school students to have opportunities to get outside during nice weather. Currently, students in grades 4-5 have a recess period connected with lunch. They have a recently installed playground, field areas, and a walking track. The middle school students have fresh air outdoor time when they finish lunch.

Our intermediate students need to have access to an age-appropriate playground. They would enjoy a place to play games like basketball and four-square. Our middle school students also enjoy getting outside in connection to their lunch period. They would enjoy some similar spaces for playing basketball, four-square, or kicking around a soccer ball.

This outdoor space should be easily accessible from the cafeteria. The visibility of the area is important so that it can be monitored easily by public safety when school is not in session.

We currently have playing fields for physical education and interscholastic sports at both schools. Students in grades 4-5 participate in an interscholastic cross country program. Our grade 6-7 students participate in interscholastic cross country, soccer, field hockey, baseball/softball, tennis, and track and field. Our indoor interscholastic sports are basketball and volleyball. Therefore, fields and gymnasium space is important.

The current fields consist of the following for the middle school:

#### **For Fall Sports**

- ♦ One Field Hockey Field
- ♦ One Boys' Soccer Field (used by Two teams JV and Varsity teams)
- ♦ One Girls' Soccer Field (used by Two teams JV and Varsity teams)
- ♦ One Competition Volleyball Net Set + 2 side by side courts used for Physical Education classes
- ♦ Outside basketball court

#### **For Winter Sports**

- ♦ Two Full size Basketball Courts

#### **For Spring Sports**

- ♦ One Track and Field  
(Long Jump pit, High Jump Area, Shot Put area, Discus Area, 5 lane track -  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile)
- ♦ One Baseball Field
- ♦ One Softball Field
- ♦ Four Tennis Courts ( Currently off campus, less than .5 mile away)  
We would request 6-8 tennis courts on new school campus

The chart below shows the number of middle school athletes over the last three years.

|               |            |
|---------------|------------|
| <b>Fall</b>   |            |
| <b>2015</b>   | <b>120</b> |
| <b>2016</b>   | <b>135</b> |
| <b>2017</b>   | <b>120</b> |
| <b>Winter</b> |            |
| <b>2015</b>   | <b>53</b>  |
| <b>2016</b>   | <b>52</b>  |
| <b>2017</b>   | <b>54</b>  |
| <b>Spring</b> |            |
| <b>2015</b>   | <b>107</b> |
| <b>2016</b>   | <b>104</b> |
| <b>2017</b>   | <b>115</b> |

During our visioning sessions outdoor learning spaces were identified as a high priority for both educational and recreational purposes. At both schools we have, and would like to continue to have, raised beds for planting vegetables. Our cafeteria staff prepares vegetables from these gardens for students to taste. The cafeteria staff started an initiative last year called Harvest of the Month where one type of fruit or vegetable is featured and prepared in a variety of ways. It would enhance our program to have a green house on site along with the raised beds. We have several garden-to-table and farm-to-table initiatives throughout the district as part of our wellness plan.

A wireless outdoor learning center would enhance educational opportunities across all disciplines. This specialty space would enable and encourage cross-disciplinary project based learning.

Currently at Mattacheese, there is an afterschool club called Bee-U, in which students cultivate a live beehive which produces honey. Not only does this address a current ecological dilemma in a proactive manner, but it also provides a real-world connection to the Science standards. Therefore, a protected outdoor space would need to be provided.

# Supporting Our Staff

## **EDUCATOR GROWTH AND SUPPORT**

### ***Professional Learning Communities***

It is well documented in educational research that teacher collaboration is central to school improvement because it creates an environment for improving practice and developing action steps to meet the needs of diverse learners. Our district has had Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) since 2007. Each school has a number of team leaders who are organized by grade level and related arts for PreK-5 and by content areas for grades 6-12. All team leaders PreK-12 meet in the summer for one week of training and for five two-hour sessions during the school year. In addition, they meet as a building-based team once a month for two hours. This ensures the continuity and consistency of a guaranteed, viable curriculum throughout the district.

The team leaders are responsible for the work of their PLCs. At Mattacheese, there are six content PLCs that meet twice for 45 minutes within a six day rotation. Support teacher and related arts PLCs meet for 45 minutes once or twice within a six day rotation. At Wixon, there are four grade level, a related arts, and a reading teacher PLC that meet for 45 minutes once a week. We anticipate that this will remain the same unless we are able to get a longer school day. Ideally with a longer day, teachers will have more time for collaboration. This is valuable time for teachers to work together on common assessments, review student data and student work, and to plan adjustments to instruction. This is critical to the improvement of student learning.

### ***Meeting Space***

Currently, PLCs meet in someone's classroom. Professional meeting space does not exist in our schools. We do not have rooms designed to be conference rooms or spaces designed for professional development.

We would like to have some adult meeting spaces with comfortable, adult-sized furniture for these and other kinds of meetings. These spaces should be located near clusters of classrooms so meeting time can be maximized. Meeting spaces with restrooms near or within them would be ideal.

### ***Teacher Preparation Time***

In addition to PLC meetings, each teacher has 250 minutes of preparation time each week. This time is provided in increments of no less than 30 minutes each. The time for this block is typically created for teachers in grades 4-5 when students attend special subject classes. Teachers often remain in their classroom during this time or access the teacher workroom for copying, etc. A teacher workroom with mailboxes, copiers, paper cutters, die cut machines, etc. is essential. A teacher dining room and/or smaller cluster based meeting/dining areas would improve our current conditions.

### ***Academic Instructional Coaches***

As we ask educators to continuously improve their instructional practices, we believe it is important to support them in the process. Academic coaches meet with individual educators, PLCs, and grade levels. They model lessons and provide professional development sessions to educator and paraprofessional staff. Currently, we have one math coach, one science coach, two literacy coaches, and two technology coaches to support our teachers in grades 4-7. A common work area/meeting space will be needed for the coaches. It could be a larger room that is divided with a space for each of them. The district recognizes the importance of and value in job-embedded professional development to support teachers in their own learning. Ideally, the space would be large enough or have an adjoining space, to be used for professional learning opportunities for up to 30 people. Technology coaches would need an office near the library media center and technology labs.

## **Administration and the Public**

### **THE ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER- SECURITY AND PUBLIC ACCESS**

The safety and of our students and staff is the foundation of a successful school. Cameras, buzz in systems, visitor ID checking, and staff keyless entry cards are all part of our current school environments. Ideally, we would like the intermediate school and the middle school to have separate entrances and administrative centers. We believe that this will contribute to safety and security as well as create a smaller school or school within a school feel. Essentially, this means two main entrances.

### ***Safety and Security***

There will need to be a different bus drop off and a parent drop off area for the intermediate school and for the middle school. The main entrances for visitors should have

double doors where visitors can come in out of the weather but can have their ID checked before being buzzed in. We use a system called Raptor to check licenses and to print ID badges. This system can also be coded to assist us in ensuring only authorized people are allowed to take particular students out of the school.

Safety and security was one of the six guiding principles that came out of the visioning sessions. In addition to the types of security mentioned above, the groups talked about the more subtle security that can allow children to work in small groups away from the teacher but still be within view. With this age group we are gradually giving them more responsibility so it is helpful to have a structure that supports that change.

While we believe in the importance of safety and security, we want the school to feel welcoming to visitors. This will be a community school and we will continue to share with our partners, such as the town recreation departments, for after school use. It will be important to have a way to keep people within those community spaces when the building is not occupied.

### ***Administrative Space***

Each main office should have office space for the principal, assistant principal (1-Wixon, 2-Mattacheese), Dean of Students (1-Wixon), and three secretarial staff (1-receptionist, 1-principal's secretary, 1-data secretary). In each administrative center, office spaces are needed for each of the following: social worker, school psychologist, special education team chair. In addition, for Mattacheese we need an office for each of the school counselors (2). Currently, our administrative center at Mattacheese has two offices for the School Resource Officers. An officer from Yarmouth is present full-time and an officer from Dennis is present part-time. The health clinic should be nearby but not within the administrative center.

Each administrative center will need the following:

- ♦ A welcoming reception area for students and families to wait
- ♦ A conference room for meetings of up to 15 people
- ♦ A teacher workroom (teacher mail, copy area, etc.)
- ♦ Secure storage
- ♦ Two adult bathrooms

### ***Public Access***

We want the public to have access to the gyms, auditorium, cafeteria, and library after hours without access to other parts of the school. There is significant use of these spaces after school hours and on weekends by the school district and the community.

### ***Transportation Policies***

The Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District offers free bus transportation to all student in grade 4-8 who live more than 1.5 miles from the school. Big bus transportation is currently contracted out to First Student. Exceptions to these guidelines can be made by the Superintendent, especially if a student must walk through a hazardous area.

Some special education students require specialized transportation. There is no distance limit for this transportation. This bus transportation is provided to students on small, district-owned buses by district drivers.

Some families choose to drive their child to and from school. In our current schools, we have a separate drop off location for parents.

### ***Natural Light and Energy Efficiency***

We have made significant progress in utilizing solar power to reduce our carbon footprint and costs. We would like to continue any energy efficiencies and improve even further.

Sometimes in the winter there are many dark days on Cape Cod. It would be useful to have as much natural light as possible as long as there are adequate window treatments to keep the light out when needed or that rooms are designed in a way that the sun wouldn't interfere with tools such as Smartboards.

# SUMMARY

## **ADVANTAGES OF THIS CONFIGURATION**

- ♦ Students will experience fewer school transitions during an age of tremendous physical and social-emotional change.
- ♦ Proximity will support our efforts to increase collaboration between classroom teachers and support staff as students move from grade 5 to grade 6.
- ♦ The close proximity of grades 4-5 and 6-7 will increase our ability to successfully bring educators together to align the curriculum vertically from 4-7 and share teaching strategies.
- ♦ The 4-7 grade configuration allows for peer mentoring opportunities.
- ♦ Related arts and support staff have greater opportunity to work together.
- ♦ Being a member of the school community for four years allows families and staff to build relationships and truly partner in the best interest of the students

## Wixon Innovation School

| Typical Day in the Life of a Student  |  |
|---|--|
| Activity or Subject   | Program Details and Educational Benefits   |
| 8:15-8:25<br>School Commences/Homeroom Period   | Students unpack, organize, and prepare for the school day.   |
| 8:25-9:10<br>Related Arts<br><b>physical education, library/media, health, art, music</b> | Related arts classes are an important part of a well-rounded education and promote a healthy lifestyle. Critical aspects in the development of the whole child.  |
| 9:10-10:40<br>Literacy  | Students engage in reading, writing, speaking, and listening instruction as delineated by the state frameworks. Prepares students for the next level of education, and to meet the district's college, career and civics goals.        |
| 10:40-11:55<br>Math   | Students engage in mathematics instruction as delineated by the state frameworks. Prepares students for the next level of education and to meet the district's college, career and civics goals .                                      |
| 11:55-12:40<br>Recess and Lunch   | Students have the opportunity to get fresh air and exercise.   |
| 12:40-1:40<br>Social Studies/Science  | Students engage in social studies/science instruction as delineated by the state frameworks. Prepares students for the next level of education and to meet the district's college, career and civics goals.                            |
| 1:45-2:30<br>Enrichment Class   | Classes are offered for remediation and acceleration in core academic skills. In addition, many enrichment classes offer students the opportunity to engage in learning that is traditionally not offered in a typical school setting. |
| 2:30-2:45<br>Home Room Period<br>2:45 - Dismissal   | Students organize, pack and prepare for dismissal.   |
| 2:45-5:00<br>Interscholastic Athletics - Cross Country Team                               | Students engage in this program to develop team building skills, healthy lifestyle choices, as well the ability to persevere.  |

## Mattacheese Middle School

| Typical Day in the Life of a Student  |  |
|---|--|
| Activity or Subject   | Program Details and Educational Benefit  |
| 8:37- 9:24<br><b>Advisory</b>   | Small group of 10 to 14 students. Our goal is building relationships with the students. Necessary record keeping occurs. PBIS behaviors are reinforced. Advisories prepare together for outside speakers.                      |
| 9:26 – 10:13<br><b>First Period</b><br>Math   | Students engage in mathematics instruction as delineated by the state frameworks. Prepares students for the next level of education and to meet the district's college, career and civics goals.                               |
| 10:15 – 11:02<br><b>Second Period</b><br>ELA  | Students engage in reading, writing, listening and speaking instruction as delineated by the state frameworks. Prepares students for the next level of education, and to meet the district's college, career and civics goals. |
| 10:15 – 11:02<br><b>Third Period</b><br>Science   | Students engage in science instruction as delineated by the state frameworks. Prepares students for the next level of education and to meet the district's college, career and civics goals.                                   |
| <b>4<sup>th</sup> Period</b><br>6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Lunch    11:04 – 11:34<br><br>6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Class    11:34 – 12:21<br>Foreign Language<br>OR<br>Math-X as Indicated   | French, German and Spanish are offered. Each language follows the 5 Cs of foreign language education to provide global education and learning.   |
| <b>4<sup>th</sup> Period</b><br>7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Class    11:04 – 11 – 51<br>Foreign Language<br>OR<br>Math-X as Indicated<br><br>7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Lunch    11:51 – 12:21 | French, German and Spanish are offered. Each language follows the 5 Cs of foreign language education to provide global education and learning.   |
| 12:23 – 1:10<br><b>5<sup>th</sup> Period</b><br>Social Studies<br>OR<br>Reading Instruction as Indicated  | Students engage in social studies instruction as delineated by the state frameworks. Prepares students for the next level of education and to meet the district's college, career and civics goals.                            |
| 1:12 – 1:59<br><b>6<sup>th</sup> Period</b><br>Related Arts<br>Art, Health, Music, Physical Education   | Related arts classes are an important part of a well-rounded education and promote a healthy lifestyle. It is a critical aspect in the development of the whole child.   |

| <b>Mattacheese Continued</b>   |  |
|--|--|
| 2:01 – 2:40<br><b>7<sup>th</sup> Period</b><br>Band, Chorus or Orchestra<br>OR<br>Independent Learning<br>OR<br>Word Generation                    | Leads students to develop their music abilities.<br><br>Word Generation emphasizes using academic language, developing an argument, reasoning analytically, reading to find evidence                   |
| 2:50 – 3:50<br>Make-Up or Extra Help<br>After School Activities<br><br><br>Interscholastic and Intra-scholastic athletics are offered each season. | All teachers provide an opportunity to make-up work or additional support in academics at least one afternoon a week.<br><br>Teachers volunteer to offer interest after school activities once a week. |