



The Public Schools of Brookline
333 Washington Street
Brookline, Massachusetts 02445

Andrew J. Bott
Superintendent

TO: Brookline School Committee
FROM: Andrew Bott, Superintendent
DATE: November 27, 2018
RE: Overcrowding in K-8 Schools

Between 2005 and 2018 the Town of Brookline has added 1,599 K-8 students into our eight elementary schools. Based on the way our schools operated just over a decade ago, the Town has added the equivalent of four full K-8 schools into our existing K-8 infrastructure. The absorption of this growth into our eight K-8 schools means our schools have seen anywhere from 18% to 68% growth over the past twelve years. This growth is captured in the chart below:

	2005-2006	2018-2019	# Growth since 2005	% Growth since 2005
Baker	647	762	115	18%
Coolidge Corner	670	873	203	30%
Driscoll	366	614	248	68%
Heath	360	522	162	45%
Lawrence	478	705	227	47%
Lincoln	410	581	171	42%
Pierce	546	865	319	58%
Runkle	427	581	154	36%
	3,904	5,503	1,599	41%

By adding the equivalent of four K-8 schools into existing buildings and rented facilities, our system has experienced a serious degradation of instructional infrastructure. Cramming so many additional students into our buildings has resulted in dramatically overburdened teaching and learning spaces, as well as cafeterias, gyms, and administrative offices. Spaces needed for contemporary education, such as dedicated rooms for special education, English language instruction, project based learning, and teacher collaboration, are lacking in all of our schools (with the exception of Coolidge Corner). These spaces are taken for granted in Brookline's peer communities, and are needed here for our students to keep pace.

The students most impacted by overcrowding are those who need the most support. Students who are English language learners, students with disabilities, low income students, and students classified as high needs* make up significant portions of each of our elementary schools. Yet, these are the very students whose instructional supports are now in our most compromised spaces. These substandard spaces

**The high needs student group is an unduplicated count of all students belonging to at least one of the following individual subgroups: Students with Disabilities, English Learners, Former English Learners, or low income students (eligible for free/reduced price lunch).*

include converted closets, converted bathrooms, tables in hallways, classrooms where two to five educators share the same space, and windowless rooms. Our BEEP program has systematically been moved out of our elementary school buildings, unraveling our once-coherent PK-8 structure.

Our early projection work this fall shows that the unprecedented growth of the past 12 years may level off over the next few years. Our initial 2023 K-8 projection shows 51 fewer total students than were enrolled on October 1st of this year. This gives the Town the opportunity to solve our existing problems through the three site solution approved by the Select Board, School Committee and Advisory in June 2018.

Often lost in the discussion of the Baldwin School and both the Driscoll and Pierce expansion/renovation projects is the current state of our elementary schools. To provide the Town with a better understanding of the school-by-school impacts of this compromised space, members of the Select Board, School Committee, and Advisory Committee toured Baker, Driscoll, Heath, Lawrence, Lincoln, Pierce and Runkle Schools. During these tours, each principal was interviewed about how the overcrowding negatively impacts our ability to educate students.

Prior to each narrative you will find capacity information for each school, as reported in the March 29, 2012 MGT Enrollment Capacity and Utilization Report. You will also find the selected student populations information, as reported in the 2017-2018 DESE School Profile. Following this information, you will find the Principal's Narrative.

The MGT capacity numbers listed below must be considered along with the significant increase in both our English Learning students, RISE and other programs for students with disabilities. These varied programs require significant amounts of space to appropriately serve student needs, putting additional stress on our already overcrowded schools. Even with our newest enrollment projection numbers, the need for the Town's three site solution is clear. This is the path that provides the town-wide capacity needed to relieve overcrowding and eliminate the use of substandard spaces across all of our schools.

Public Schools of Brookline 2005-2018 Enrollment v. Capacity						
	2005 Enrollment	2008 Enrollment	2012 Enrollment	2018 Enrollment	Capacity*	Number of Students Over + or (Under) Capacity
Baker	647	672	678	762	679	+83
Coolidge Corner	670	689	764	873	945**	(72)
Driscoll	366	403	530	614	574	+40
Heath	360	402	494	522	553	(31)
Lawrence	478	557	623	705	572***	+133
Lincoln	410	469	545	581	437	+144
Pierce	546	630	699	865	634	+231
Runkle	427	468	494	581	616	(35)

Enrollment figures for Coolidge Corner, Driscoll, Heath and Runkle Schools do not include BEEP students.

**Capacity information based on March 29, 2012 MGT Enrollment Capacity and Utilization Report*

***CCS capacity is 945, effective 9/1/18 based on new construction*

****Four additional classrooms were added at Lawrence in 2015, but there was no addition of common core spaces or small instructional spaces*

RISE* Student Enrollment 2008-2018

2018 - 2019	51
2017 - 2018	48
2016 - 2017	42
2015 - 2016	42
2014 - 2015	45
2013 - 2014	43
2012 - 2013	35
2011 - 2012	33
2010 - 2011	24
2009 - 2010	17
2008 - 2009	12

English Learner Student Enrollment 2013-2018

2018 - 2019	922
2017 - 2018	818
2016 - 2017	785
2015 - 2016	709
2014 - 2015	679
2013 - 2014	656

**RISE: Reaching Independence through Structured Education program for students on the PDD/autism spectrum*

Baker

Capacity Information based March 29, 2012 MGT Enrollment Capacity and Utilization Report

Capacity: 679
2005 Enrollment: 647
2008 Enrollment: 672
2012 Enrollment: 678
Current Enrollment: 762
Number of students over capacity: 83

Selected Student Populations, 2017-2018 (Source: DESE School Profile)

Title	% of School	% of District	% of State
First Language not English	36.0	30.7	20.9
English Language Learner	13.4	10.8	10.2
Students With Disabilities	14.4	15.5	17.7
High Needs	35.7	33.4	46.6
Economically Disadvantaged	7.3	10.8	32.0

Number of classes with more than 21 students: 12

Principal's Narrative

- Guidance counselors, educational leaders, principal and vice principals struggle to meet the needs of students due to lack of space to adequately service student needs.
 - The co-principals and vice-principal share one office, which interferes with their ability to run the school. Only one confidential meeting at a time can take place, often requiring students, educators and families to wait.
 - There is not the physical space needed to meet with students. Additional student support staffing will not allow the school to address unmet student needs because no spaces are available for additional staff to work.
 - Guidance counselors share an office, preventing counselors from having on-demand, confidential conversations with students. The need for student services has increased over the past decade, yet space has been taken from guidance to make room for new classrooms.
 - At various points in the year, individual students may require a private, quiet space to calm down. These spaces no longer exist, so students are required to calm down in open spaces and/or in hallways, posing significant privacy concerns for students. A closet has been converted to a calming space, but it is open to the hallway and anyone who may walk by.

- Teachers across the school are utilizing hallways as learning spaces, often for small group instruction meant to support our most struggling students. This includes literacy intervention/support, math intervention/support, small group EL instruction, and special education services.
- The auditorium is used as a music classroom, so the school cannot program school events or outside programming without displacing elementary music.
- English Language instruction for different languages and students receiving services across multiple proficiency levels are held in the same space, at the same time. At times, math and ELE services take place in the same space.
- In the literacy intervention class, there are at times three different intervention groups held simultaneously, requiring some students to wear noise cancelling headphones in order to access intervention services.
- Rather than a maker space, there is a maker “cart”. Without a dedicated space, long term collaborative, project based learning projects are not feasible.
- The educational technology specialist who serves all Baker educators and 762 students works in a small closet instead of an office or classroom. From this space, the ETS provides both technical support and instructional coaching required for the integration of technology into the curriculum.
- The gymnasium is almost half the size recommended by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) for the number of students at the school. In order to meet Brookline’s expectation of twice weekly physical education classes for all students, classes are regularly combined in the gym.
- The medical suite is undersized and does not meet the MSBA guidelines. It is approximately half the size that it should be and lacks separate spaces for different functions, such as an examination room, student resting area, outer waiting room and separate nurse’s office space. Currently, all of these functions take place in one 374 sq. ft. room with no dedicated toilet.
- Cafeteria is substandard in size requiring four lunches, with the first lunch starting at 10:55 a.m. and the last lunch time ending at 1:10 p.m. (on Fridays, school ends just 30 minutes later).
- Baker School has undergone numerous interior modifications to create additional enrollment driven instructional space including:
 - Adding walls to subdivide classrooms into two rooms
 - Using the small area outside of the elevator door as a learning space
 - One hallway has been walled off and converted into two classrooms
 - A science classroom has been carved out of a basic classroom - no eye wash and the small classroom layout is suboptimal so many of the students cannot see the board adequately
 - Adding folding walls to subdivide rooms into smaller rooms
 - Removing fixtures and lockers from the boys’ locker room to create a music room
 - Dividing the art room into two smaller art rooms to provide two teaching spaces
 - Modifying closets into a special education small group instructional area
 - Gutting closet space to create office space
 - Creating new door into gymnasium so existing storage space could be used as a Physical Education office space.
 - Adding two modular classrooms

Substandard Spaces at Baker



ETS Office (Closet in Library)



Shared office for two Principals and VP



Music classroom in auditorium



"Maker Space"



Literacy Room for Numerous Educators



Closet used as calming space



Small group breakout - learning space outside elevator



Math Specialist in Shared Space



Science lab without adequate water, electricity, or access to safety features (including eye wash and shower)

Driscoll

Capacity Information based March 29, 2012 MGT Enrollment Capacity and Utilization Report

Capacity: 574

2005 Enrollment: 366

2008 Enrollment: 403

2012 Enrollment: 530

Current Enrollment: 614*

Number of students over capacity: 40

*Not inclusive of 1 BEEP Class

Selected Student Populations, 2017-2018 (Source: DESE School Profile)

Title	% of School	% of District	% of State
First Language not English	26.9	30.7	20.9
English Language Learner	9.4	10.8	10.2
Students With Disabilities	13.7	15.5	17.7
High Needs	28.6	33.4	46.6
Economically Disadvantaged	7.5	10.8	32.0

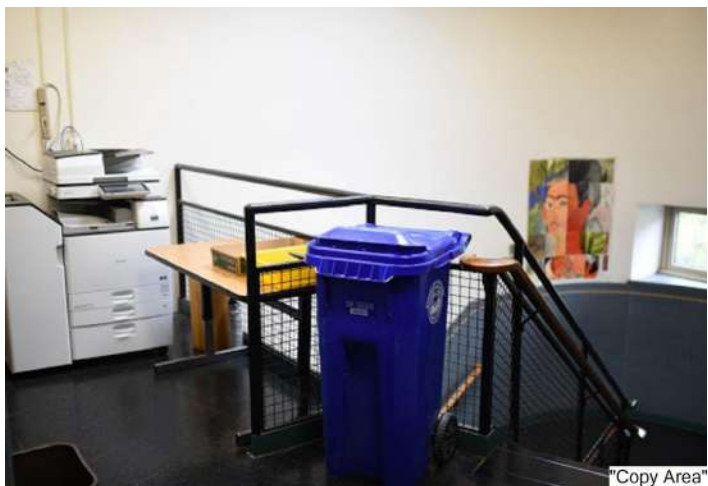
of classes with more than 21 students: 17

Principal's Narrative

- One bathroom has been converted into an office; book rooms have been converted into makeshift offices.
- Educational instruction is taking place in closets. One of the closets is shared by three educators.
- Multiple classrooms, in particular middle school classrooms, are undersized for the number of students and cannot support collaborative, project based learning.
- Middle school science classrooms lack proper safety equipment. Classrooms are so undersized they limit the types of science experiments that can be taught as part of the science curriculum.
- No meeting spaces are available for teacher collaboration, or for sensitive conversations with parents, students, or colleagues.
- The medical bed that is required for a student does not fit in the nurse's office so it is located in a hallway. The medical suite is undersized and lacks separate spaces for different functions, such as examination room, student resting area, outer waiting room and separate nurse's office space. The current medical area consists of one 244 sq. ft. room. This area doesn't meet the Massachusetts School Building Authority guidelines of 610 sq. ft.
- Spaces in the basement (ground floor level) not intended to be classrooms have been converted into instructional spaces, including a space that was formerly a locker room. These conversions have resulted in classrooms that lack proper windows and natural daylight.

- Spaces that were once the showers and locker room are now the multipurpose room.
- Undersized cafeteria requires five lunches, with the first lunch beginning at 10:15 a.m. and the 5th lunch ending at 12:50 p.m.
- Spaces that once held two classrooms have now been reconfigured and new walls built to create three separate classrooms.
- Reading intervention for struggling readers takes place in the hallway.
- ELE services are in shared classrooms and often have three teaching groups going on at the same time.
- Small group instruction for students, including struggling students, EL students, and students with disabilities, often takes place at tables in the hallways.
- Stairwell is used for the copy room.

Substandard Spaces at Driscoll



Heath

Capacity Information based March 29, 2012 MGT Enrollment Capacity and Utilization Report

Capacity: 553

2005 Enrollment: 360

2008 Enrollment: 402

2012 Enrollment: 494

Current Enrollment: 522*

Number of students under capacity: 31

*Not inclusive of 2 BEEP Classes

Selected Student Populations, 2017-2018 (Source: DESE School Profile)

Title	% of School	% of District	% of State
First Language not English	19.5	30.7	20.9
English Language Learner	4.6	10.8	10.2
Students With Disabilities	10.1	15.5	17.7
High Needs	21.1	33.4	46.6
Economically Disadvantaged	7.4	10.8	32.0

Number of classes with more than 21 students: 6

Principal's Narrative

- Locker rooms have been converted into classrooms, but are so small that there is barely enough space for student desks. When the class is full, some students sit on the floor. In order to access these classrooms, students must go up a flight of stairs with no ADA accessibility.
- All but two closets have been converted into offices and instructional spaces, for guidance, literacy specialists, math specialists, and special education instruction. There are only two storage closets remaining.
- One former storage space located on the ground floor is used by the EL teacher, a guidance counselor, an occupational therapist, and a literacy specialist. This room has no windows. Private and often sensitive meetings with the school counselor take place in a space behind a makeshift curtain with no separate door for privacy.
- What was formerly a bathroom off of the converted locker rooms has been converted into an office for the METCO liaison.
- The teachers' lounge is a windowless room that has been carved up and subdivided to allow for other uses, including guidance, ECS and math specialists.
- The cafeteria is not adequately sized for the number of tables needed for three lunches. Extra chairs are pulled up to tables each day to allow students to eat in the cafeteria.

- The lack of collaborative work space in the school means the library is often used by educators for meetings and as a work space.
- The lack of space poses a safety issue. Hallways are often used for storage, which limits walkway space. There is also not appropriate space to secure and store equipment, such as the school's kiln which is located in a corner of the art room.
- Special education instruction takes place in converted closets, with some rooms having no windows. Multiple groups from different grades working on distinct goals are often required to meet in the same space.

Substandard Spaces at Heath



World language classroom converted from locker room



Teacher collaborative meeting in the library



Converted storage space - 4 educators, 4 different programs, no windows



Inadequate space for all students to have desks



Guidance

Lawrence

Capacity Information based March 29, 2012 MGT Enrollment Capacity and Utilization Report

Capacity: 572*

2005 Enrollment: 478

2008 Enrollment: 557

2012 Enrollment: 623

Current Enrollment: 705

Number of students over capacity: 133

**Four additional classrooms were added at Lawrence in 2015, but there was no addition of common core spaces or small instructional spaces*

Selected Student Populations, 2017-2018 (Source: DESE School Profile)

Title	% of School	% of District	% of State
First Language not English	38.4	30.7	20.9
English Language Learner	20.1	10.8	10.2
Students With Disabilities	12.9	15.5	17.7
High Needs	41.1	33.4	46.6
Economically Disadvantaged	11.2	10.8	32.0

Number of classes with more than 21 students: 9

Principal's Narrative

Next year, there will not be sufficient physical space to accommodate the entire middle school program

- The school has no space to accommodate the additional 8th grade section next year. Without this space, it is likely that class size will need to increase.
- The same class is not always held in the same classroom. For example, on Tuesday, the students might have English in one room, and on Thursday, English is held in a different room. Health class also moves around to different classrooms throughout the week. This kind of shuffling prevents educators from planning long-term collaborative hands-on projects .

Challenging spaces for special education

- Small group instruction is taking place in inadequate spaces.
- Literacy room: five educators use the same room and three of them hold small groups, often at the same time. At the same time, the two other educators who support planning curriculum and professional development for the entire school are trying to use the same space to work.
- Learning center: one classroom is used for two separate classes.

Inadequate space for the ELE program

- Two teachers are using the same undersized space. 70 students who receive ELE services at Lawrence receive services in the same single classroom.

Library is no longer available for the students

- The library is the only common space available at the school, so it is now used for many functions, often interfering with the students' ability to use the library.
- There is no media/computer room so the library is used for middle school classes.
- As part of "expand-in-place", a classroom was built in the library two years ago, further reducing space and availability.
- Since there is no other room available, the library is used for school council meetings, teacher meetings with parents, and for Diversity, Inclusion, Community & Equity "DICE" meetings.
- Teachers sign up to bring their students to the library during the week, but these times are often canceled because the library is being used for other "spaces."

Substandard Spaces in Lawrence



Literacy room for five educators



Classroom built inside the library

Lincoln

Capacity Information based March 29, 2012 MGT Enrollment Capacity and Utilisation Report

Capacity: 437
2005 Enrollment: 410
2008 Enrollment: 469
2012 Enrollment: 545
Current Enrollment: 581
Number of students over capacity: 144

Selected Student Populations, 2017-2018 (Source: DESE School Profile)

Title	% of School	% of District	% of State
First Language not English	32.2	30.7	20.9
English Language Learner	16.4	10.8	10.2
Students With Disabilities	17.3	15.5	17.7
High Needs	42.0	33.4	46.6
Economically Disadvantaged	14.7	10.8	32.0

Principal's Narrative

Hallway areas meant for collaborative work have been converted into classrooms by adding walls that block natural light

- Many intervention services are provided in hallways: struggling students must work in the hallways while other students walk by, providing constant distractions.
- All special education spaces at Lincoln are undersized and impact the ability of educators to meet individual student goals.

Situation in the library

- In the library, two math specialists work in a storage area.
- Math instruction and library classes occur at the same time, with no sound buffer.
- A closet in the library is the teaching space for a Literacy Specialist.
- The METCO Coordinator has a desk in the library (behind the circulation desk), but must wait until the Literacy Specialist vacates the closet to have privacy for calls or meetings.

The cafeteria is inadequate

- Lunch starts at 10:30am
- The middle school lunch uses every seat in the cafeteria with no space for additional seats or tables.

Other space issues

- The basement computer lab is used as a social studies classroom. Extended Day also shares that room, and staff begins preparation for the extended day program during a seventh-grade social

studies class. This same space is also used by the technology specialist, and the inclusion facilitator.

- Lincoln is proud to have an Adaptive Learning Center for children with severe learning, physical and cognitive disabilities, but it is in small, inadequate rooms not designed as classrooms. There are no bathrooms in the ALC classroom spaces so public bathrooms are closed down for periods of time for these students.
- There is inadequate occupational therapy and physical therapy spaces, impacting the ability to meet students' needs.
- There is no sensory gym or large occupational therapy space for students in the Adaptive Learning Center.
- There are not enough bathrooms for staff or for the number of students in the building.
- The gym is undersized, and some classes have to be doubled up.
- The ELE program has been growing and the space available for these classrooms has been shrinking. Currently, two teachers teach in one classroom at the same time.
- Space is not available for conservatory and now percussion meets in the cafeteria; clarinets in the basement; 4th grade flute meets in a classroom while a 3rd grade general education class is working right next door trying to learn.
- There are no longer enough classrooms or even carve-out spaces for the specialists, so classrooms have literally been created in the hallway.

Substandard Spaces in Lincoln



Specialist carved out of hallway



Guidance carved out of hallway



Small group space for Special Education in hallway

Pierce

Capacity Information based March 29, 2012 MGT Enrollment Capacity and Utilization Report

Capacity: 634
2005 Enrollment: 546
2008 Enrollment: 630
2012 Enrollment: 699
Current Enrollment: 865
Number of students over capacity: **231**

Selected Student Populations, 2017-2018 (Source: DESE School Profile)

Title	% of School	% of District	% of State
First Language not English	32.0	30.7	20.9
English Language Learner	17.2	10.8	10.2
Students With Disabilities	10.7	15.5	17.7
High Needs	34.5	33.4	46.6
Economically Disadvantaged	11.3	10.8	32.0

Principal's Narrative:

Active classroom is used as a hallway

- The only indoor connector between the main building and the historic building is through a tunnel/pathway that goes directly through a classroom.
- When students in classrooms in the historic building go to lunch, recess, or to any specialist such as music, physical education or art, they travel through this classroom. In nice weather, the students go outside around the building, but sometimes, this cut-through cannot be avoided.

Common spaces are overtaxed

- The gymnasium is too small so two classes use the space at one time.
- At lunch and recess, there are so many students in these spaces that some children feel very overwhelmed, making lunch and recess stressful times instead of a needed break for them.

Transitions take too much time

- Students spend approximately 30 minutes every day transitioning, which is time off learning.
- Conservatory (music instruction) takes place at the Brookline Teen Center down the street, which involves students leaving the school and walking across the street and down the block, resulting in less instructional time.
- Time blocks have to be scheduled based on what is available, not what is best for the students. Because the 8th graders have health at the teen center, all of their core content is

after lunch, which is not an ideal schedule for them. The principal has to make trade-offs like this because there is no flexibility in the day.

Next year there will not be sufficient space to accommodate the entire middle school

- There will be one additional 6th grade section next year and the same number of 7th and 8th grade sections. Even if another teacher is hired, there is no space for that classroom and there is not the space available to accommodate the scheduling blocks that go along with a middle school schedule.

Other examples of inadequate spaces:

- Literacy and math interventions take place in the hallway.
- ELE spaces have been doubled up and two teachers use one classroom at the same time.
- There is no space for services to take place. For example, the principal's office is used for occupational therapy services.
- Lunches start at 10:45 a.m. and go until 12:55 p.m.
- There are not enough collaborative learning spaces; teachers have to sit on the floor for the faculty meeting.
- Lockers have been inserted into the library.
- One entire wing of the school is not ADA accessible to students with disabilities.
- The nurse wing is not ADA accessible to students with disabilities.
- The nurse's office is not adequate in size and, at times during the day there is a line out of the door.

Substandard Spaces in Pierce



Classrooms carved out of library



Lockers inserted into the library



Science lab cut into two



Stage carved out of gym

Runkle

Capacity Information based March 29, 2012 MGT Enrollment Capacity and Utilization Report

Capacity: 616

2005 Enrollment: 427

2008 Enrollment: 468

2012 Enrollment: 494

Current Enrollment: 581*

Number of students under capacity: 35

*Not inclusive of 1 BEEP Class

Selected Student Populations, 2017-2018 (Source: DESE School Profile)

Title	% of School	% of District	% of State
First Language not English	25.8	30.7	20.9
English Language Learner	9.1	10.8	10.2
Students With Disabilities	20.3	15.5	17.7
High Needs	31.7	33.4	46.6
Economically Disadvantaged	6.9	10.8	32.0

Principal's Narrative

How is Runkle overcrowded?

- Runkle was renovated and expanded to fit 600 students. We currently have 581 students. However, the school is overcrowded because there is inadequate space for the special educators and specialists required to support Brookline's *Reaching for Independence through Structured Education* (RISE) program.
- Runkle is home to RISE, one of the fastest growing district-wide programs, which educates students on the PDD/autism spectrum. Currently, there are 51 students in the RISE program and Runkle does not have adequate space for this growing program in addition to a full three sections per grade level.

Space restrictions are impacting the school's ability to meet the social and emotional needs of the students

- An additional part-time psychologist was needed to meet the needs of the Runkle student population. This psychologist was hired, however, there is not the space available in which this professional can work. Now both of the psychologists not only share the same office, they share the same desk. They cannot meet with students or parents at the same time because of the nature of their work; the space restrictions negatively impact their ability to serve the needs of the students.

- The psychologists now have to spend precious time - time they should be spending on the students - trying to find empty classrooms or private corners for these sensitive meetings to take place.

Special Education instruction is taking place in compromised spaces

- 2 RISE classes share one classroom. In a typical RISE classroom, there are seven students, one teacher, and six paraprofessionals. Currently, two RISE classes share one classroom. This means that at sometimes during the day, 14 students, two teachers, and 12 paraprofessionals are in the same classroom at one time.
- The sensory room is longer used exclusively as a sensory room. It is now used as the sensory room, office for adaptive physical education teacher, and “cool down” room for children who need a separate space.
- Since there is not a separate cool down room, hallways are used as break places when the sensory room is not available. This means children with significant challenges who are struggling with their emotions and self-control have to do so in public. Additionally, because of the size of the school and the number of children in the RISE program, there should be more than one cool down room throughout the school.
- Resources that are needed, and even available, cannot be utilized adequately because space is not available:
 - Example: **Sensory overload swing**- rather than having this setup all of the time, there is a hook in the middle of one classroom. When students would like to use this space, several educators need to set it up for the student to use it and it has to be taken down when they are finished. Other teachers would like to utilize it, and the sensory room would be a more appropriate place for it and make it more accessible, but there is not the space available.
 - Example: **Trampoline**- a trampoline is a valuable tool for students with special needs. The special education teachers requested a trampoline to use with the children and the funding was obtained, but they could not set it up because there is no space for it.

Other space challenges:

- Runkle has four lunches starting at 10:30 a.m.
- The educational vision for the district includes a maker space and break out spaces for collaborative learning. There is not space for these at Runkle. They only have a maker “cart”.
- There are no breakout spaces for collaborative learning.
- Instruction for both general education students and special education students is taking place in former storage closets and hallways.

Substandard Spaces in Runkle



Storage room used for small group learning

