

DRAFT

Countryside Elementary School Educational Program



Newton Public Schools
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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Grade & School Configuration Policies	5
Class Size Policies	5
School Scheduling Method	7
Teaching Methodology and Structure	9
Teacher Planning	16
Pre-Kindergarten Program	17
Kindergarten Program	18
Lunch Programs	18
Technology Instruction Policies & Program Requirements	19
Visual Art Programs	20
Performing Arts Programs	21
Physical Education Programs	21
Special Education Programs	202
Vocations and Technology Programs	25
Core Academic Space Narrative	25
Transportation Policies	29
Functional & Spatial Relationships and Key Programmatic Adjacencies	27
Security & Visual Access Requirements	28
Day in the Life of Student	33
Week in the Life of Student	Error! Bookmark not defined.

Introduction

The Newton Public Schools (NPS) provides educational programs for students in grades preschool through grade 12, as well as post-secondary programs.

Mission of the Newton Public Schools

To educate, prepare, and inspire all students to achieve their full potential as lifelong learners, thinkers, and productive contributors to our global society.

Core Values

The following Core Values are guiding principles for the Newton Public Schools.

Excellence: We will

- Set high expectations and standards for all students and staff
- Educate the whole child by striving for excellence in academic, artistic, physical, interpersonal and vocational pursuits
- Inspire a lifelong love of learning in students and staff

Innovation: We will

- Be a recognized leader in education and curriculum development
- Foster inventiveness, open-mindedness, critical thinking, creativity and collaborative problem-solving in our students and staff
- Continuously assess and improve our teaching and learning

Respect: We will

- Create an environment where everyone feels known, safe, and valued
- Recognize the uniqueness and dignity of individuals of differing races, religions, classes, ethnicities, sexual orientations, learning styles and abilities (Statement of Values and Commitment to Racial Equity)
- Build upon the strengths of our diverse community

Responsibility: We will

- Foster an environment in which all students and adults take responsibility for their individual and collective behavior
- Create a culture of collaboration, collegiality and honest communication
- Cultivate citizens who contribute to and care about their community and the world

These values represent how we want to “live” within our school communities. Core Values are for children and adults to embrace, internalize, model and live by. They are an expression of what is deep and enduring in our school system.

Newton Public Schools System Wide Goals

This attached [NPS System Wide Goals 2022-2023](#) document identifies the priorities of the Newton Public Schools for the 2022-23 school year. Our system-wide goals focus upon academic excellence, educational equity, and social and emotional wellbeing. The goal areas and related actions build upon the work of the 2021-22 school year and reflect the ongoing commitment to system growth and improvement to meet the needs of all learners. While goals are situated within separate categories, it is important to note that the areas of focus are interrelated and inextricably linked. Ensuring positive, productive, and fulfilling learning experiences for all students requires attention to a myriad of factors that create welcoming, inclusive, equitable, challenging, and engaging learning environments necessary for students to thrive.

Teaching Philosophy and Methods

Newton Public Schools provides a rigorous elementary educational program for students in kindergarten through grade five. Countryside Elementary School is a diverse school, with a growing population of English language learners, and has a strong sense of community and support, celebrating its uniqueness through curriculum, arts and ongoing community service involving students and families.

Countryside, similar to all Newton schools, embraces inclusion. It is a school where teachers collaborate to provide best practice instruction and proactive forms of intervention both in and outside the general education classroom. Teaming is central to how the Countryside School community collaborates, and a spirit of inclusive community is core to the culture of the school. Professional Learning Communities and Response To Intervention blocks of time are regularly scheduled at Countryside. Teachers meet weekly to assess data from formative assessments and to plan for lessons for Flexible Grouping Times.

Countryside has 3rd, 4th and 5th grade co-taught models staffed by a full-time general education teacher, a special education teacher and a full-time intern from a local university. This team works to differentiate instruction with a focus on reading strategies across the curriculum. Specialized 1:1 reading instruction and all other academic supports are delivered in the classroom environment requiring additional classroom space that minimizes pull out services.

The English Language Learner Program (ELL) consistently has approximately 40 - 50 students per year. Small groups of students meet with the ELL teacher several times a week both in and outside the classroom for direct English instruction.

The Newton Public Schools, including the Countryside Elementary School, has long been a participating district in the METCO Program. There are currently 20 Boston students at Countryside, with several new students enrolling in the program in grades K-1 each year, as 5th grade students move to middle school. These students and their families are fully included in the Countryside community.

Grade & School Configuration Policies

The Newton Public Schools provides educational programs for students in grades preschool through grade 12, as well as post-secondary programs. As of October 1, 2022, the system-wide K-12 enrollment was 11,721 students. In 2023-2024, the Newton Public Schools is projected to serve close to 11,700 students.

The fifteen elementary schools in Newton educate students from kindergarten through grade five; the four middle schools serve students in grades 6 through 8; and the two high schools serve grades 9 through 12. Students attend the Newton elementary and middle schools in their geographical neighborhoods.

Students at Angier, Countryside, Mason-Rice and Williams Elementary Schools feed into Brown Middle School and then to Newton South High School, with a small percentage (3-4%) of students from Mason-Rice going to Newton North High School.

Students at Bowen, Memorial-Spaulding and Zervas Elementary Schools feed into Oak Hill Middle School and then to Newton South High School.

Students at Burr, Cabot, Franklin, Horace Mann and Peirce Elementary Schools feed into Day Middle School and then to Newton North High School.

Students at Lincoln-Eliot, Underwood and Ward Elementary Schools feed into Bigelow Middle School and then to Newton North High School.

The Newton Early Childhood Program (NECP) is a district-wide integrated preschool program which is currently located at 150 Jackson Road. This program will move to 687 Watertown Street (the former Horace Mann School) once the NECP construction project is complete in December of 2022. The NECP serves Pre-K students with special needs as well as typically developing children.

The Countryside School currently stands fifth in elementary enrollment size out of fifteen total elementary schools with an enrollment of 372 students as of October 1, 2022. The students at Countryside School proceed to grade 6 at Brown Middle School and then move to Newton South High School for grades 9 through 12.

There is no plan to modify the grade configurations as a result of the Countryside Elementary School project.

Class Size Policies

The Newton School Committee and the Newton Teachers Association recognize that class size is an important factor in quality education. Attempts are made to keep class sizes close to the guidelines listed below, recognizing that in certain cases, some classes may have higher enrollment:

Kindergarten through Second Grade 1 - 22 students

Third through Fifth Grades 1 - 24 students

No changes are proposed to the class size guidelines for the Countryside Elementary School as a result of this project.

Average class sizes for all Newton Elementary Schools and for the Countryside Elementary School as of October 1, 2022 are shown below.

Grade	Countryside ES Average Class Size	All NPS Elementary Schools Average Class Size
Kindergarten	19 students	18.8
Grade 1	16.3 students	19.7
Grade 2	22 students	20
Grade 3	18 students	19.5
Grade 4	21 students	20.2
Grade 5	23.3 students	21.1
Average for K-5	19.7 students	19.9

CLASS SIZE – 340 Student Enrollment

To maintain class sizes, it is strongly recommended that there be three classrooms per grade for kindergarten through grade 3 with two classrooms per grade in grades 4 and 5. The third classroom in grade 3 provides flexibility to be used as a bubble classroom for grades 3 through 5 when a larger than expected cohort occurs. The organization of the classrooms will be important to accommodate a class size that is larger than the typical class size. The proposed breakdown per grade based upon an enrollment of 340 students is shown in the chart below.

GOAL Class Size	K	1	2	3	4	5	Total
# Students (Average)	57	57	57	57	56	56	340
Average # students/class	22	22	22	24	24	24	
# of classrooms	2.59	2.59	2.59	2.37	2.37	2.37	14.88
Round for Total Classrooms / Grade	3	3	3	3	2	2	16

CLASS SIZE – 465 Student Enrollment

To maintain class sizes, it is strongly recommended that there be four classrooms per grade for kindergarten through grade 2 with three classrooms per grade in grades 3 through 5. The organization of the classrooms will be important to accommodate a class size that is larger than the

typical class size. The proposed breakdown per grade based upon an enrollment of 465 students is shown in the chart below.

GOAL Class Size	K	1	2	3	4	5	Total
# Students (Average)	78	78	78	77	77	77	465
Average # students/class	22	22	22	24	24	24	
# of classrooms	3.55	3.55	3.55	3.20	3.20	3.20	20.25
Round for Total Classrooms / Grade	4	4	4	3	3	3	21

School Scheduling Method

The Newton Public Schools has articulated specific instructional time allotments for elementary core subjects, which include reading, writing, mathematics, science, social studies and social curriculum. Specialist programs both enhance the core program and provide contractual preparation time for classroom teachers. These time allotments per week for either enrollment of 340 students or 465 students are as follows and no changes are proposed:

- Reading - 300-450 minutes
- Writing - 120-200 minutes
- Mathematics - 275-350 minutes
- Science/Tech Engineering - 90-120 minutes
- Social Studies - 45-120 minutes
- Social Curriculum - 30 minutes
- Art – 45 minutes (K); 50 minutes (1-5); 55 minutes
- Music – 30 minutes (K-2, 4-5); 30 minutes including Recorder (3)
- Chorus – 45 minutes (4, 5)
- Physical Education, Health and Wellness - 60 minutes for 1-5 and 90 minutes for K
- Library – 30 minutes (K, 3-5); 45 minutes (1, 2)

The Newton School Committee recognizes the importance of providing adequate numbers of specialist teachers in both elementary and secondary schools. Elementary specialist teachers are defined as Art, Music, Physical Education, and Library-Media. These programs are a vital component of the complete educational program that are both a value and expectation of the Newton Public Schools to offer all students.

Article 43: “Elementary Preparation Time” of the collective bargaining agreement states that elementary teachers are entitled to a 30-minute duty-free and meeting-free lunch period. In addition, elementary classroom teachers are scheduled for a minimum of 180 minutes of preparation time per week.

The current specialist sections at Countryside Elementary are as follows:

- Art - Nineteen 45-55 minute blocks are taught by one Art teacher.
- Music – Nineteen 30 minute blocks of general music for grades K-5. Additionally, three sections of recorder for grade 3 and two 45-minute sessions for 4th and 5th grade chorus, by one Music teacher. Fourth grade band lessons are taught by the music teacher and a part time educator comes to teach strings.
- Band or String - In addition to general classroom music and 4th and 5th grade chorus, students in 4th grade may elect to take an introductory band or string instrument. Instrumental lessons are small group, pullout lessons during the school day. Students in 5th grade or other grades who are already proficient on an instrument may elect to participate in the Countryside band or orchestra. The ensemble groups each meet once per week for 45 minutes. Chorus is compulsory for 4th and 5th grade students and is scheduled within the school day. The 4th grade chorus runs for 45 minutes, once per week and the 5th grade chorus runs for 60 minutes, once per week. General music class meets once per week for grades K-2 and 4-5. The 3rd grade meets for 45 minutes and includes compulsory instruction on the recorder.
- Physical Education, Health, and Wellness - Thirty 30-minute blocks are taught per week for grades 1-5 with six 45-minute blocks for Kindergarten by one Physical Education teacher.
- Library/Media - The Countryside School Library is currently staffed for 4 days of the week. The Library/Media teacher instructs each class in grades K, 3, 4, and 5 for a 30-minute block every school week. Each class in grades 1 and 2 have a library class every week for a 45-minute block of time. Unscheduled times for Library Teachers are designated as flextime. Library flextime is designed to provide unscheduled blocks of time during the school day for collaboration between the library teacher and the classroom teacher, as well as time to manage the library collection.
- Instructional Technology - Instructional technology is integrated into the classrooms and is supported by an Instructional Technology Specialist who typically works with three elementary schools. The Instructional Technology Specialist works as an instructional coach supporting teachers in the use of technology to enhance teaching and learning. Currently, there are no designated classes or labs for the teaching of technology directly to students. Digital literacy skills are taught as part of the library curriculum and regular classroom curriculum.

Teaching Methodology and Structure

Newton Public Schools is committed to providing a rigorous educational program characterized by challenging academic content and engaging, relevant, and culturally responsive instruction. In alignment with our system-wide goals, every school is focused upon academic excellence, educational equity, and social and emotional wellbeing.

Countryside Elementary School is one of fifteen elementary schools in the Newton Public Schools, currently serving approximately 380 students in grades K through five in 19 classrooms. The students at Countryside include Newton residents and students from Boston who attend the Newton Public Schools via the METCO program. Fostering a safe, caring, and welcoming learning environment in

which every child experiences a sense of belonging, challenge, joy, and engagement are key priorities at Countryside School.

A variety of programs and structures support the diverse learning needs of students. Teachers provide rigorous instruction aligned with grade level learning standards and work in collaboration with specialists and support staff to ensure student progress. Grade level teams routinely meet with math and literacy coaches to plan instruction, review student progress, and design interventions and enrichment opportunities for students. District level curriculum coordinators provide regular professional development to support teachers in building their content knowledge and pedagogy on an ongoing basis.

Supporting students' academic and social emotional growth is central to the work of Countryside School. Teachers collaborate to provide engaging standards-aligned instruction and timely, supportive interventions both in and outside the general education classroom. Classroom teachers work closely with their grade level colleagues to plan instruction, progress monitor, and design tiered interventions to support student growth and progress. Teachers consult with the Student Intervention Team (SIT), composed of the Literacy Specialist, Math Coach, School Psychologist, Social Emotional Learning Interventionist, and classroom teachers to brainstorm additional strategies and interventions to implement within 4-6 week instructional cycles. The classroom teacher collects and shares data on the strategies implemented to monitor student progress and adjust support as necessary.

Every year, Countryside students include 40-50 English Language Learners of varied English proficiency and home languages, who learn alongside their grade level peers. Small groups of students meet with the ELL teacher several times a week both in and outside the classroom for direct English instruction.

Newton Public Schools has a long standing commitment to educating students with educational disabilities within the least restrictive environment. In keeping with this commitment, Countryside School includes students with educational disabilities within general education classrooms as much as possible. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) delineate the goals and programming for students with identified disabilities and services are thus, as the name implies, highly individualized.

One model of inclusion, however, is through co-teaching. The co-teaching model pairs a general education teacher with a special educator with a classroom of students, approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ of whom have IEPs. At Countryside, co-teaching classrooms are offered in grades 3, 4, and 5. In the co-taught classrooms, the team works to differentiate instruction with a focus on reading strategies across the curriculum. Specialized 1:1 reading instruction and all other academic supports are delivered in the classroom environment requiring additional classroom space that minimizes pull out services. In addition to co-teaching, special educators provide specialized instruction through small group and individual instruction both in the general education classroom and pull-out settings.

NPS offers five district wide programs to provide learning cohorts and highly specialized instruction for elementary students with specific disability profiles. Countryside hosts one such district wide program, known as SPARK. The SPARK Program supports students with a primary educational disability of Autism or a Communication disability. The SPARK program ensures a supportive and cohesive, school learning environment for students who exhibit difficulties with social thinking, anxiety management, sensory and emotional regulation and academic performance related to their disability. The program is run by

2 special education teachers with collaboration and consultation by the general education teachers. SPARK also receives comprehensive consultation from a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA), speech language pathologist, psychologist, other related service providers as determined by the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), and partners with experts in the field as appropriate. Goals are embedded in meaningful activities for students and centered around increasing skills and independence.

Countryside School engages in Professional Learning Communities (PLC). The school is organized in six teams from kindergarten through grade five. These teams include general education, special education and ELL teachers. They conduct the data cycle as a collaborative team to improve learning for all students in the grade level. The 60-minute PLC blocks support their ability to collaborate within the school day. The regularly scheduled 30-45 minute grade level intervention blocks provide direct instruction to small groups of students focusing on specific skill development in literacy and math. The teachers implement the Common Core standards, and the rigorous curriculum and assessment expectations set forth by the Newton Public Schools.

Flexible Grouping

General education teachers engage in flexible grouping methods to meet the instructional needs of their students and as determined by the professional learning communities. Grouping and regrouping methods take place weekly within classrooms and among grade level classrooms. General education, special education and ELL teachers collaborate seamlessly to provide tier one (general curriculum), tier two (strategic intervention) and tier three (intensive intervention) in the inclusive environment. Pullout instruction is provided for students who require it, based on their personalized instructional needs within tier two and tier three programming. There is shared responsibility among the faculty for all students' success. Grade level classrooms are organized within common hallways and adjacent locations. Close proximity is critical in order to achieve the requisite communication and collaboration for flexible grouping methods in a grade level PLC team.

Below is an overview of the general elementary curriculum, methods and practices used by teachers. The curriculum remains the same for either enrollment of 340 students or 465 students.

English Language Arts / Literacy

There is explicit reading instruction in a variety of modes in every grade, continually engaging students at several distinct levels of challenge: an instructional level, just at the edge of the student's ability at that point in time, a challenge level offering harder material and an independent level using easier material to work on fluency and expression and to practice comprehension strategies. The curriculum and delivery method will not change with the "new" facility however there will be appropriate spaces to deliver the curriculum.

Specific instructional components at each grade level include:

- Primary: interactive read aloud, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, and phonics / word study.
- Intermediate: interactive read aloud, shared reading, guided reading (including strategy lessons, book clubs and literature circles), independent reading, and word study.

There is an emphasis on independent reading and the development of a lifelong reading habit; this includes nightly reading by all students in grades 1 - 8 and accountability by teachers through reading logs and folders.

Explicit writing instruction - Writing Units of Study, Teachers' College Reading and Writing Project; common writing prompts and scoring methods that include focused experiences in narrative, opinion, and informational, and both written and oral feedback from teachers:

- All grades: authorship experiences that emphasize conferring, revising, editing, publishing and celebrating creative efforts
- Intermediate: focus lessons on a variety of rhetorical and stylistic issues including specific narrative and expository techniques, planning and organizing, rich language, elaboration; serious examination of sentence structure and sentence boundaries; emphasis on writing as a tool to enhance learning and thinking in all subject areas

Assessment practices include:

- Screening and Benchmark assessments - Early Bird, and i-Ready, letter naming fluency, nonsense word fluency, and oral reading fluency, Benchmark Assessment System,
- Summative Assessments - Foundations Unit Tests, Newton Word Pattern Survey (phonics word lists);

Tier 2 Intervention includes:

- Targeted, skills-based interventions in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary

Integration with Social Sciences and Science:

- Social Sciences and ELA Integrated Units of Study developed by NPS
- Science and ELA Integrated Units of Study developed by NPS;

Although most of the reading and writing instruction takes place within the classroom environment, smaller work areas are necessary to facilitate individualized instruction, both in 1:1 and small group settings. Areas inside and outside the classroom are preferred.

In support of literacy, a new or renovated building will house a Literacy Center which would serve many purposes. The space would be used for professional learning for teachers and assistants, and will provide an alternative location for specialized instruction for small groups or 1:1 intervention. The specialized materials used for literacy intervention would be stored in a centralized location to facilitate access by teachers providing RTI (Response to Intervention) services to students in classrooms and small group spaces. The collection used for literacy instruction would also be housed in the shared literacy center space to facilitate sharing the texts and materials across classes and grade levels.

Mathematics

Students learn mathematics in whole class, small group, and partner configurations. The curriculum includes a variety of hands-on activities and many materials that require storage space in each classroom. Often students are working with manipulatives at their desks or in common spaces such as on the rug or at larger tables. Several times per week students need access to an online program. For this they use their assigned iPads or Chromebooks.

Teachers often project the curriculum and student work using an interactive whiteboard or an ELMO system. This allows all students to be able to see the content, either from their desks or a common space in the classroom. The teachers need to be able to access the technology easily while circulating around the room to check in with students who are engaging with the curriculum. The objective of each lesson is to present students with a variety of experiences in math class where tasks consistently encourage high-level student thinking, synthesis and application. Some of these tasks require a lot of space and materials, such as building cubic meters with meter sticks and tape. Students need to be able to work in small groups with enough space to meet the demands of the task.

NPS uses the Investigations3 curriculum. This includes opportunities for numeracy work, core instruction, practice activities, extension activities, small group work, partner work, math projects and the use of spiral reviews. To foster the mathematical practice standards, teachers lead students in computational and conceptual conversations that stress problem solving, the use of multiple representations through mathematical modeling, and sharing of their ideas. Teachers differentiate lessons by addressing the gaps in student learning and offering adjusted activities that provide an enhanced study of the math concepts. For students who have been identified with intervention needs, a math enhancement block is available. Students with IEPs have their needs met with a combination of co-teaching and pullout services to support their learning.

Math coaches are responsible for supporting classroom educators with instructional practice. Most of the time coaches are working with students and teachers in the classrooms. They also require a separate office to store materials, meet with other educators such as English Language and Special Education teachers, and occasionally work with one or two students.

Math interventionists work with small groups of three to four students outside of the classroom. They need table space for the group that can also accommodate manipulatives that support the mathematical concepts. They also use whiteboards to model the mathematics and the students use the boards to explain their thinking through annotation or drawing.

The curriculum and delivery method will not change with the “new” facility however there will be appropriate spaces to support delivery of the curriculum.

Science

Teachers implement a hands-on science and engineering curriculum. There are typically three units at each grade level. These units address standards for the following domains: life science, physical science, earth and space science, and engineering.

Instructional components include:

- Investigation - Pairs and groups of students work with a variety of materials to make sense of science phenomena.
- Demonstration - Teachers model science phenomena for the whole class.
- Observation - Students observe scientific models, and living materials, including crabs, butterflies, and wood frogs.

- Reading - Information texts are used to deepen understanding, through teacher read-alouds and paired reading.
- Recording scientific ideas - Students explain their understanding of scientific phenomena through writing, using drawn models to enhance their descriptions.

The materials for science investigations come in unit ‘kits.’ There are 3 curricular units (3 kits) per year that are stored in 4-8 large storage bins per classroom. Teachers will need space in their classroom to keep 1-3 bins for regular access for a given unit.

In addition to storage space, teachers and students need space to complete investigations. This requires a variety of physical spaces in the classroom including:

- a teacher demonstration area (large teacher or small group desk)
- table or shelf space for science materials set-up prior to distribution
- table space for multi-week observation of living animals (tadpoles, bugs, butterflies) or demonstrations (3-bottle system for water cycle)
- student desks that are flat so that materials that roll and liquids can be used
- adequate physical space to provide for safe movement with science and engineering materials (45 sq. ft. per student for elementary classrooms for science, as recommended by [NSTA: Motz, Biehle, and West, 2007](#))

Additionally, in-classroom sinks are required for investigations at each grade level.

The curriculum and delivery method are not proposed to change.

Social Studies

Students engage in a history/social sciences curriculum that, wherever possible, integrates with the informational skills components of the new Mass Frameworks for English Language Arts (incorporating the Common Core Standards). It is important that there be wall space available for maps and educational posters/displays as well as ample storage capacity for books and other content materials. Classroom space to provide enough room for small group projects and whole class presentations is needed. The curriculum and delivery method will not change with the “new” facility.

World Language

Newton Public Schools does not offer world language instruction at the elementary level and this is not proposed to change.

Social/Emotional Learning

Responsive Classroom provides the underlying foundation of all that we do each and every day at Countryside for all grades. It is a nationally acclaimed approach to teaching and learning, which is founded upon the belief that the social curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum and that the best learning takes place when children live in a school environment that is kind, safe, respectful, and predictable. An area of the classroom is typically zoned for morning meetings and other similar functions. Our approach to social and emotional learning will not change in the “new” facility.

Academic Support Programs

ELL

There are currently 47 English learners enrolled at Countryside Elementary School who are supported by an ELL teacher and an ELL aide. The model is “push in” and “pull out” depending on a student’s English proficiency. Students at the entering and developing stage need a designated ELL learning classroom. The curriculum and delivery method will not change with the “new” facility.

Literacy and Math Support

Although most of the reading and writing instruction takes place within the classroom environment, smaller work areas are necessary to facilitate individualized instruction, both in 1:1 and small group settings. Areas inside and outside the classroom are preferred.

In support of literacy, a new building will house a Literacy Center which would serve many purposes. The space would be the location of professional learning for teachers, assistants, and parents. In addition, the Literacy Center will provide an alternative location where teachers may utilize the space for specialized instruction for small groups or 1:1 intervention. The specialized materials used for literacy intervention would also be stored in a centralized location to facilitate access by teachers providing RTI (Response to Intervention) services to students in classrooms and small group spaces. The collection used for literacy instruction would also be housed in the shared literacy center space to facilitate sharing the texts and materials across classes and grade levels.

To support effective math instruction, math coaches work with classroom educators on instructional practice. Most of the time coaches are working with students and teachers in the classrooms. They also require a separate office to store materials, meet with other educators such as English Language and Special Education teachers, and occasionally work with one or two students.

Math interventionists work with small groups of three to four students outside of the classroom. They need table space for the group that can also accommodate manipulatives that support the mathematical concepts. They also use whiteboards to model the mathematics and the students use the boards to explain their thinking through annotation or drawing.

Ideally, each floor would include instructional spaces (small group rooms) adjacent to clusters of classrooms for small group lessons. Literacy specialists, math coaches, ELL teachers and special education staff would utilize the small group rooms.

Student Guidance and Support Programs

Social/Emotional Learning

Responsive Classroom provides the underlying foundation of all that we do each and every day at Countryside for all grades. It is a nationally acclaimed approach to teaching and learning, which is founded upon the belief that the social curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum and that the best learning takes place when children live in a school environment that is kind, safe, respectful, and predictable. An area of the classroom is typically zoned for morning meetings and other similar functions. Our approach to social and emotional learning will not change in the “new” facility.

METCO

The Newton Public Schools, including the Countryside Elementary School, has long been a participating district in the METCO Program. There are currently 20 Boston students at Countryside, with several new students enrolling in the program in grades K-1 each year, as 5th grade students move to middle school. These students and their families are fully included in the Countryside community.

Countryside Children's Center

The Countryside Children's Center (CCC) is the extended day program at Countryside. It currently uses the room behind the gym, the gym and cafeteria for their extended day programs which serve more than 100 students each year.

Teacher Planning

Article 43: "Elementary Preparation Time" of the collective bargaining agreement states:

Each elementary teacher will be scheduled for a minimum of 180 minutes of preparation time per week (during the regular school day), which is to be scheduled in meaningful units, pro-rated by FTE. Given the minimum scheduled preparation time of 180 minutes per week, elementary teachers will receive a minimum of 30 minutes of duty-free preparation time (excluding their duty-free lunch time) for three (3) days per week, and the Committee will make reasonable efforts to continue providing, subject to economic factors, a minimum of 30 minutes of duty-free preparation time (excluding their duty-free lunch time) on two (2) additional days per week for a total of five (5) days per week."

Teachers provide rigorous instruction aligned with grade level learning standards and work in collaboration with specialists and support staff to ensure student progress. Grade level teams routinely meet with math and literacy coaches to plan instruction, review student progress, and design interventions and enrichment opportunities for students. District level curriculum coordinators provide regular professional development to support teachers in building their content knowledge and pedagogy on an ongoing basis. As noted, elementary classroom teachers are scheduled for a minimum of 180 minutes of preparation time per week.

Existing support and teacher planning spaces are either non-existent, or undersized, throughout the school. Offices for support staff either don't exist, are shared by multiple specialists, or are in sub-optimal locations. General education teachers often remain in their classroom during their planning / preparation time.

Although there will be no changes to the teacher planning time in a new facility, there will be multiple spaces within close proximity to classroom neighborhoods for teacher planning, collaboration, and to support small, flexible group work spaces. The spaces will be designed to accommodate project-based learning, with optimal acoustics to allow for privacy, and flexible furniture to support all students. This would support and promote collaboration, communication and flexible groupings. Having small group rooms in the neighborhood would also promote our sense of inclusion. The classroom spaces in each neighborhood would offer flexibility for project-based learning.

Classrooms across grades provide inclusion for students with special needs so it is critical to provide small quiet working areas within these classrooms to meet the educational needs of the inclusion and integrated students.

In a new facility, there should be enough special education spaces which would be large enough for teacher planning, testing, consultation, and small group instruction. The special education teaching spaces should be centrally located on each academic floor for easy access. A school for 465 students will require two learning centers to meet the needs of the students.

Pre-Kindergarten

The Newton Early Childhood Program (NECP) is a district-wide integrated preschool program. NPS believes that an inclusive education provides all children with the opportunity to learn with and from each other. All children gain valuable experiences in an environment where children are different in their abilities. Our curriculum is based on the Massachusetts Department of Education Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences and Massachusetts Department of Education Guidelines for Social and Emotional Learning, and Approaches to Play and Learning, with play as an important vehicle for learning both early academics and social skills. We believe our inclusive program builds a lifelong foundation for respecting human differences, compassion, empathy and kindness.

Each preschool class is staffed with a Masters level teacher and two to four teacher assistants. In addition, speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists and behavior therapists are involved in our classrooms. Our professional staff also includes board certified behavior analysts (BCBAs), vision and mobility specialists, a school psychologist, a social worker, a school nurse, and a physical education teacher.

NECP is currently located at 150 Jackson Road. This program will move to 687 Watertown Street (the former Horace Mann School) once the NECP construction project is complete in December of 2022. There are no proposed changes to the NECP curriculum as a result of the Countryside Elementary School project.

The NECP program currently includes:

- 2 Integrated Classrooms 8:30-1:30 four days/week & 8:30-12:00 Wednesdays
- 2 Integrated Classrooms 9:00-2:00 four days/week & 9:00-12:00 Wednesdays
- 7 Integrated Classrooms 9:00-12:00 Monday-Friday
- 2 Non-Integrated Classrooms 8:30-2:30 three days/week, 8:30-2:00 one day/week, & 8:30-12:00 Wednesdays

For community peer tuition students who are enrolled in some of the 9:00-2:00 programming, the afternoon time offers small group instruction (typically 8-9 students in total) with a focus on social skill development and/or academic intervention. Community peers benefit from the small group instruction while supporting students with special needs as peer models. It is important to note that your child's 12:00pm-2:00pm group teacher and classroom location may be different from their 9:00am-12:00pm morning classroom (NECP staff facilitate the transition between classes if necessary), and NECP does have two 9:00am-2:00pm classrooms that are a full enrollment (16 student) placement for the whole classroom time.

Kindergarten

Newton Public Schools offers full-day Kindergarten at each of the elementary schools. The curriculum is the same as grades 1 through 5 and is addressed within the curriculum as stated above in the Teaching Methodology and Structure section. There are no proposed changes to the Kindergarten curriculum for an enrollment of 340 students or 465 students

Lunch Programs

The original Countryside building did not have a cafeteria, as students typically went home for lunch when the building was built. In 2009, the auditorium was converted to a cafetorium by removing the seating and leveling the floor. A retractable wall was installed to separate the back part of the auditorium for use as a cafeteria. The retractable wall is moved if use of the whole auditorium is needed. This means that everything in the cafeteria must be mobile so that it can be easily moved out of the way when needed. A small, inadequate warming kitchen is located across the corridor from the cafetorium. This kitchen has older equipment and limited space to expand food options for students beyond basic heat and serve capacity.

Whitsons Culinary Group currently provides food service. Meals are delivered daily because there is no freezer and only limited refrigerator space. Food is heated in an oven across the hall in the small kitchen and then kept in a warming cabinet. Six lunches are served each day, except Wednesday, when the students are dismissed at 12:20, and eat lunch at home. Lunch service begins at 11:30 a.m., with the last lunch concluding at 1:40 p.m. Lunch shifts are organized by individual grade level. Each grade level uses the upper cafeteria to eat in 20-minute intervals. The current location of the cafeteria space is inadequate in terms of space and sound issues.

In the new facility, the size of the cafetorium should accommodate a minimum of two grades eating at a time, for three seatings per day. To fully support the food service program, the kitchen should be adequately sized to accommodate a full-service kitchen as well as serving lines for approximately 115 students with an enrollment of 340 students or approximately 155 students for a student enrollment of 465 at each seating. It is anticipated that a stage will be included in the cafeteria for school performances, assemblies, and other programs. The increased area will allow lunch to be reduced to three seatings and with an appropriately sized and equipped kitchen, food quality would improve and lunch delivery would change so that it aligns with the district's elementary food service program.

Technology Instruction Policies & Program Requirements

Technology Integration

Countryside School currently offers the following instructional technology:

- Every classroom is equipped with:
 - Document Camera
 - LCD Projector (Grade 5 classrooms have interactive SmartBoards or Interactive Projectors)
- Students are provided devices for use during school according to the following model:
 - Kindergarten: 1 iPad per 2 students

- Grades 1 and 2: Fully 1:1 with iPads
- Grades 3-5: Fully 1:1 with Chromebooks
- Additionally, printers are scattered throughout the building to provide access to printing for both teachers and students. There is approximately one printer in each hallway/wing of the building for shared use.

Technology has become an indispensable component of the learning environment. Technology is used to improve student access to content and learning, provide project-based learning experiences, enhance and diversify methods students use to demonstrate their understanding, and build student digital literacy skills so they can become more self-directed learners in our digital world. A wide variety of software is used by teachers on a regular basis including, but not limited to, Google for Education, BrainPop, Newsela, Seesaw (grades K-2), ST Math, PebbleGo, and SORA. Teachers, as part of their Professional Learning Communities, also use technology to collect and analyze student assessment data.

Given the reliance on technology for instruction, it is imperative the network infrastructure in the school is reliable and robust to support 100s of simultaneous connections without interruption. There is an *Acceptable Use Policy* for students and staff in the district. All staff members participate in an annual, mandatory training regarding the district policy. All students receive instruction in the *Acceptable Use Policy* during the first two months of the school year.

Library / Media Center

Students meet in library class once every week:

- Grades K, 3, 4, and 5 for a 30-minute block
- Grades 1 and 2 for a 45-minute block of time.

The library serves as an information hub for research and learning about both print and digital resources. During library class students learn research skills and digital literacy skills following a district led curriculum. Newton Public Schools belongs to the Massachusetts State Library System (MSL), allowing students access to online resources such as the Commonwealth eBook program (SORA), Encyclopedia Britannica and the Gale Databases. Each K-5 school in Newton also has a subscription to PebbleGo, PebbleGo Next, BrainPop and TumbleBooks through the library.

The Countryside library has about 9,000 books in its collection that are made available to students, staff and families. A portion of class library time is devoted to students selecting and checking out books on a weekly basis to promote interest in reading.

Technology: Instructional Model

Instructional technology is integrated into the classrooms and is supported by a full-time Instructional Technology Specialist who typically works with three elementary schools. The Instructional Technology Specialist works as an instructional coach supporting teachers in the use of technology to enhance teaching and learning. Currently, there are no designated classes or labs for the teaching of technology directly to students. Digital literacy skills are taught as part of the library curriculum and regular classroom curriculum.

In the “new” facility all classrooms will have some type of presentation technology (projector and

white board) and document cameras. In addition, sound reinforcement technology will be in every classroom, with assisted listening devices with the ability to connect to student hearing devices.

Visual Arts Program

The Newton Public Schools has a vibrant visual arts program. Within the week, all students at Countryside take one 45-55 minute visual art class. The curriculum and delivery method will not change with the “new” facility including the use of a kiln. The 1999 modular classroom is currently being used as an Art Room.

The new art room must be equipped to provide all students with a rigorous, varied, and exciting art education in a variety of high-quality media and with many possibilities for interdisciplinary connection. Ample storage spaces must be provided for flat works on paper or canvas as well as three-dimensional mixed-media sculpture. A clay storage area and well-ventilated kiln and glazing area are required, separate from the areas storing paper or flammable liquids. NPS is well versed with the use of kilns at the elementary school level. The new school will have the proper safety measures to accommodate the art curriculum including the kiln and materials. The kiln will have its own designated room.

The art room must have ample natural light as well as wall space for a projector, whiteboard, and bulletin board surfaces for displaying exemplary student work and additional relevant works of art. Sinks of varying height (suited to a variety of age ranges) must be provided – three to four sinks would be ideal. Cabinets, countertops, drying racks, and storage cubbies must be provided to store the work of hundreds of students as well as all of the supplies to serve the whole school.

Music / Performing Arts Programs

The Newton Public Schools has a vibrant performing arts program. Within the week, grades K-2 and 4-5 take one 30-minute general music class, 3rd grade has one 45 minute class, and 4th and 5th grades take chorus for 45 and 50 minutes each week. Instrumental music lessons (band and strings) are available for students in 4th grade in weekly 30-minute group lessons. The school also provides Band and Orchestra ensembles for grade 5 students and others for one 45-60 minute rehearsal per week. One large music classroom accompanied by one smaller instrument storage room/small group lesson space is desirable to support the music program. The large classroom should provide ample open floor space for dance and movement activities as well as risers for organized seating/standing for singing activities.

Countryside hosts a variety of music concerts (choral and instrumental) throughout the school year. The students perform in an annual variety show or musical theatre production. A cafetorium with an ample stage is preferred to support music and performing arts programs. Steps or risers between the floor and the stage are desirable for preventing the need to move risers from the music classroom. A cafetorium also allows for the stage to be used for music/performance rehearsals before and after lunch as well as for school wide performances and presentations held for students and parents throughout the year.

The curriculum and delivery method will not change with the “new” facility.

Physical Education Program

All students, K-5, participate in instructional, quality physical education programs twice a week, for 30 minutes each class. The curriculum is presented in accordance with the Massachusetts Frameworks and the National Standards for Quality Physical Education, however, still falls short of the recommended time for physical education in elementary schools, which is 225 minutes per week. Adapted Physical Education classes meet once a week in the gymnasium and one-on-one support services within the classroom are provided once a week. The current gym is significantly undersized; a full size gymnasium is needed to fully support the health and physical education program.

In support of the importance of physical activity as a major necessity for student learning, the district requires that all elementary students participate in recess in its state enforced Wellness Policy. The gym should be located to connect directly to outdoor play and recreation space.

The curriculum and delivery method will not change with the “new” facility.

Special Education Programs

Philosophy and Approach: An inclusive education helps prepare students with and without disabilities for life and good citizenship.

The goal is for students to make effective progress within an environment that is supportive and welcoming. This is achieved through collaboration among families, administrators, general education teachers, special education teachers, and related service providers. Providing special education services mainly within the general education setting is called Full Inclusion of the IEP.

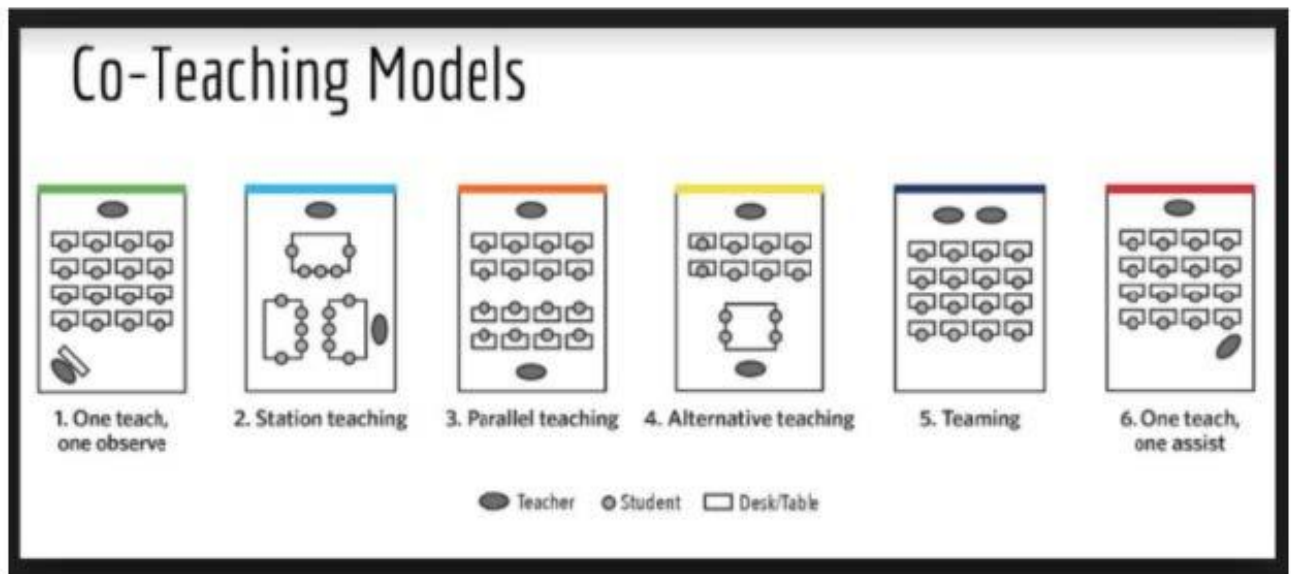
Newton Public Schools (NPS) has a long-standing commitment to educating students with educational disabilities within the least restrictive environment (LRE). This commitment has blossomed over many years into something NPS feels is woven into the fabric of our school communities. Including students with educational disabilities is most successful when school and families and caregivers can collaborate.

This educational model challenges schools to meet the needs of all students by educating learners with disabilities alongside students who do not have identified educational disabilities. The environment necessary to nurture and foster inclusion is built upon a shared belief system between general and special education, and a willingness to merge the talents and resources of teachers.

The mission of all of the schools in Newton is to maximize the potential and independence of each student. An inclusive education helps prepare students with disabilities for an integrated adult life and builds understanding and acceptance within the broader community.

Staffing Patterns

NPS strives to include students with disabilities into the general education classrooms as much as is possible to afford effective progress. One way in achieving this is through co-teaching. Co-teaching can occur in many forms and may include a combination of general education teachers, special education teachers, teaching assistants, and behavior therapists. This can vary between the preschool, elementary, and secondary levels, and can also vary based on the content being delivered. In the field, co-teaching is generally understood to have six basic models. NPS uses these models fluidly, in some form, in all of the schools.



The staff that provides special education services includes special education teachers, inclusion facilitators, aides, behavior therapists and related service providers such as school psychologists, social workers, speech/language pathologists, occupational therapists and physical therapists. In many cases these positions are shared among more than one school, but together they represent a team-based approach to supporting students and families in need at the elementary level in Newton.

Related Services

Related services encompass specialized services from licensed professionals in particular domains. These related services are designed to support skill building necessary for effective access to educational experiences within the life of the school and are provided to students who require this specialized intervention to access their curriculum. Providers effort to provide services within the classroom as much as possible and will pull children out of class only when necessary to provide the needed interventions.

A full list of related service domains are listed below:

Adapted Physical Education (APE)

APE services are for students who need specialized instruction to access the general education physical education curriculum.

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)

ABA services are for students who present educational and behavioral needs that benefit from highly structured instruction and interventions inclusive of systematic individualized instruction (e.g. discrete trial training, natural environment training, comprehensive behavior support plans). Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is a scientifically validated method to teach a variety of skills and to address challenging behavior. A Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) provides services and consultation to students and the student's IEP Team and direct service delivery is provided by a behavior therapist, a special education aide with specialized experience and training who implements ABA methods under the direction of a BCBA.

Assistive Technology

Assistive technology must be considered in conjunction with the student's IEP and, when recommended, must support IEP goals and objectives. Assistive technology consultation or assessment determines what is educationally needed for a student to make effective progress as part of FAPE. To determine which device and/or strategy will be the best fit for the student the Assistive Technology Specialist follows the SETT Framework, reviewing the student need, their environment and the tasks they are asked to do in their educational setting to choose the appropriate tool for them.

Counseling Services

Counseling services are for students who have identified social-emotional or mental health needs that interfere with the student's ability to access their education. Services may include individual or group counseling, consultation with teachers, parents and outside providers. Services are provided by social workers, school psychologists, school counselors and counseling interns.

Music Therapy

Music therapy services are provided to assist students in accessing the curriculum. Individual and group music therapy sessions are provided based on student need. Music therapy services are provided through consultation, one-on-one, small group and in-class formats by a music therapist.

Physical Therapy (PT)

Physical therapy services are for students whose physical disabilities interfere with their ability to access their educational program and environment, including students with motor and/or functional limitations caused by neurological or orthopedic impairments. Physical therapy services are provided in consultation, one-on-one, small group and in-class formats by physical therapists.

Occupational Therapy (OT)

Occupational therapy is a related service for students who qualify for special education services. Occupational therapy services promote the development of motor, play, social and adaptive abilities of children who experience a wide range of challenges. The OT evaluation provides information to assist the team in creating an appropriate educational plan to support the student's school participation. Occupational therapy services are provided through consultation, one-on-one, small group and in-class formats by registered occupational therapists (OTR) and/or certified occupational therapy assistants (COTA).

Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Deaf and Hard of Hearing services are for students who have a diagnosed hearing loss. Deaf and Hard of Hearing services provide students with equal access to all communication, learning, and social activities in the school setting. Deaf and Hard of Hearing services are provided in consultation, one-on-one, small group and in-class formats by a staff of specialists for the deaf and hard of hearing, teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing, sign language interpreters, captionists, signing aides, and classroom aides, as well as a consulting educational audiologist.

Services for the Visually Impaired

Vision and Orientation and Mobility services are for students who have diagnosed vision concerns. Vision and Orientation and Mobility services provide students with Braille literacy instruction, use of assistive technology, transportation access, community, vocational and academic access, and skills of daily living. Vision and Orientation and Mobility services are provided in consultation, one-

on-one, small group and in-class formats by a teacher of the visually impaired (TVI) and an orientation and mobility provider.

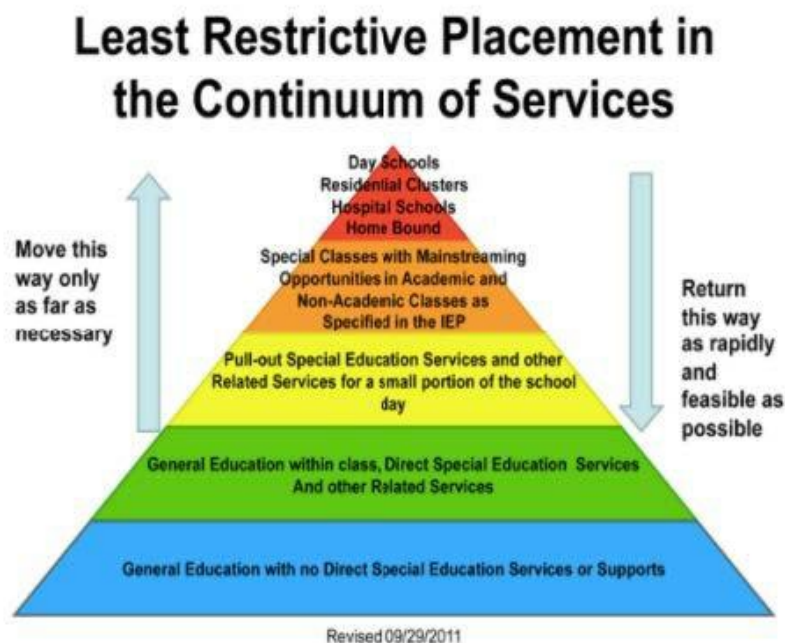
Speech and Language Therapy

Speech and language services are for students whose education is adversely affected by communication difficulties. Treatment can be provided to eligible students who have language, pragmatic, voice, fluency, articulation or augmentative/alternative communication needs that directly impact their ability to access the curriculum. Services are provided by Speech and Language Pathologists (SLP) and Speech and Language Pathology Assistants (SLP-A).

Continuum of Services

Within the continuum of services, we identify the level of special education services needed and customize based on individual needs. Among these designators are full inclusion services, partial inclusion services, and substantially separate services. Although NPS supports the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), services and support can be provided both within and outside the general education classroom. The nature of this support varies and is specific to a student’s needs.

While NPS is deeply committed to supporting students within the least restrictive environment, the district also recognizes that a small percentage of students may need more intensive support during part of their school day. Adding more intensive supports or more restrictive supports may cause the students IEP services to be delivered outside of the general education classroom for part of the day (called partial inclusion on the IEP) or sometimes most of the day (called substantially separate on the IEP). This type of service delivery can be supported through the assigned neighborhood school or supported by a citywide program. The location of the services is proposed by the IEP team. Please review the diagram below to see how inclusive education works within the least restrictive environment.



The full list and descriptions of the citywide special programs is attached to the Educational Program.

The following description responds to the specific special programs at the Countryside Elementary School.

The percentage of students in the district and at Countryside School with an IEP is between 17-19%.

Aligned with NPS' approach to special education, students at the Countryside School are supported through a variety of teaching models - co-teaching, team teaching, flexible grouping, small group instruction, and individualized instruction. Teachers believe that all learners should be provided differentiated forms of instruction and recognize that all students learn in different ways, rates, and timeframes. To that end, the Countryside School continually adapts its staffing support, instructional methodologies, and assessment practices to meet student needs.

Tiered levels of instruction provide the regular education foundation of Countryside School's continuum of service model. Countryside Staff provide tiered levels of instruction to all students (Tier One - the general classroom curriculum; Tier Two - strategic levels of instruction; Tier Three - intensive levels of instruction usually at an individualized level.) If a student demonstrates academic and/or social/emotional/behavioral concerns despite thorough RTI procedures, the teacher refers the student to the building Student Support Team. This Team supports teachers in implementing additional strategies.

Special education services at Countryside School range from the least restrictive (for example, in class support services) to more restrictive (significant amount of multiple services out of the regular education classroom). Countryside School offers rooms available for pullout small group and individual instruction provided by special education teachers and inclusion facilitators who support inclusion for students with significant disabilities. Related service providers include speech/language pathologists, an occupational therapist, a physical therapist, a psychologist, and a social worker. Teachers of deaf/hearing impaired students and vision-impaired students also support students with these disabilities in accessing the curriculum.

The Countryside School utilizes the co-teaching model in grades 3-5, taught by a special education teacher and a regular education teacher, to support students with special needs. These classrooms include regular education students and students with special needs enrolled at Countryside. Students with special needs are supported academically and socially through small group and individual teaching, modifications of the curriculum, and classroom accommodations. The goal of the program is to address students' multiple needs by providing a comprehensive range of services and a consistent, structured, and nurturing environment throughout the school day.

Special education learning spaces should be situated among regular education classrooms. The location of the classrooms should allow staff to communicate and collaborate fluidly throughout the day on student needs and programming. The number of students in these classrooms is monitored to ensure that a lower class size is maintained in order to allow the flexible learning requirements of the students.

In support of the special education services Countryside currently has one Special Education teaching space. The students with a moderate level of special needs who require this service account for over approximately 18% of the total student body. Two Special Education teaching spaces will be required

to accommodate the student population of either 340 or 465 students.

Two Speech & Language Pathologists (SLP) currently work at the Countryside School. Looking ahead to a new consolidated school, there will be a need for dedicated space for Speech and Language.

One Team Specialist works at the Countryside School. The Team Specialist leads special education team meetings, supervises special education staff and organizes all mandated documentation associated with special education services. Looking ahead to a new school, there will be a need for one (1) Team Specialist which will require a dedicated office space as well as require conference space for Team Meetings of staff and parents in a confidential location near the SPED Leadership Team.

One Psychologist works at the Countryside School. The school psychologist at the new school would require a private office for testing and meeting with families and should be adjacent to the administration and team meeting conference space. To ensure confidentiality and privacy, related service providers require individual spaces in the new school.

Countryside elementary school also employs a BCBA who provides services and consultation to students and the student's IEP Team and direct service delivery is provided by a behavior therapist, a special education aide with specialized experience and training who implements ABA methods under the direction of a BCBA. A dedicated office located near the Team Specialist is required.

Countryside Elementary School serves the SPARK citywide special education program. This is strategic positioning for this program, as students from Countryside move up to the Brown Middle School where the SPARK program is located for grades 6-8.

Ages/Grades Served	K-5
Student Profile	The SPARK Programming supports students with the primary educational disability of Autism or a Communication disability with deficits in social pragmatics, communication and social interactions. Students present with a variety of challenges including anxiety, social thinking, self awareness and executive functioning, as well as sensory and emotional regulation. In addition, students' learning may not be at grade level, and their needs are best met in a smaller separate classroom, or in a partial inclusion environment.
Program Offerings	The program is supported by a special education teacher in partnership from general education teachers. SPARK also receives comprehensive consultation from a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA), speech language pathologist, psychologist, other related service providers as determined by the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). SPARK provides an educational experience for students within both separate and inclusive instructional settings which are individualized for each student. The team works collaboratively with the student, family, general education teacher, specialists, IEP team members, and community based therapeutic providers to determine how to provide meaningful and consistent supports across settings.

Program Description	The SPARK program ensures a supportive and cohesive, school learning environment for students who exhibit difficulties with social thinking, anxiety management, sensory and emotional regulation and academic performance related to their disability. Goals are embedded in meaningful activities for students and centered around increasing skills and independence. These skills are consistently being modeled, monitored, and explicitly taught about flexibility, perspective-taking, and self-advocacy. The SPARK program works collaboratively with all team members to build upon the student’s strengths in order to enhance academic and social progress.
Scope of Program	All academic content areas can be provided in a substantially separate or partial inclusion setting as needed. Within the SPARK classrooms, students access the curriculum in a small, supportive environment that focuses on the development of social pragmatics, social skills, sensory and emotional regulation and executive functioning skills. The small group setting allows for pacing of instruction to be flexible and meet individual student needs. As students increase their level of independence they can access more inclusion services and opportunities. Inclusive Practices and Opportunities The continuum of instructional opportunities allows the TEAM to make the least restrictive decision while still offering a therapeutic program. Each student is connected to a general education teacher and classroom where students are able to access academic, specials, and social opportunities. These opportunities are tailored to the individualized student needs.

The last Tiered Focused Monitoring (TFM) (formerly Coordinated Program Review) was April of 2022. There were no issues or problems identified at that review. The SPARK program at Countryside was created after the TFM and therefore it did not appear in that write up.

At this current time there are no additional programs to be addressed with this project.

The programs and services identified above will continue at the “new” Countryside School and no other programs or services will be moved from within the District as a result of this project.

Vocations and Technology programs

There are no vocation or technology programs being offered at the Elementary School level.

Core Academic Space Narrative

Please see the “Teaching Methodology and Structure” section above and the attached “Day in the Life of Student” and “Week in the life of Student” charts for detailed descriptions of core academic educational activities that take place both inside general education classrooms as well as activities that are intended to take place outside of the general classrooms.

Transportation Policies

The Newton Public Schools transportation department is committed to ensuring students are transported safely to and from school. Students typically arrive at school in one of three ways – walk, bike, or bus. In addition, some families choose to drive students to school.

Newton Public Schools provides bus transportation free of charge for all K-5 elementary school students and for 6th grade middle school students who reside more than two miles away from school. Students in grades 7-12 and 6th grade students who live less than two miles from school pay a fee of \$350 to ride the bus. There is a family cap of \$700, and families may apply for a fee waiver based on financial hardship so that no student is denied bus transportation. Special education transportation services are separate from regular bus transportation.

Countryside Elementary School currently has three district buses and one Boston bus for students in the METCO program, as well as one district van. Students who are bused are dropped off in a live, bus drop-off lane between 7:50 a.m. and 8:10 a.m. daily. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, school dismisses at 2:50 p.m. and on Wednesdays, school dismisses at 12:20 p.m. due to weekly professional development for teaching staff. The school staff provides safety and supervision on the school property during arrival and dismissal times. The city Police Department provides two crossing guards in the vicinity of the school at the intersection of Dedham Street at Woodcliff Road and at the intersection of Dedham Street and Walnut Street.

Functional & Spatial Relationships and Key Programmatic Adjacencies

Functional and spatial relationships and adjacencies are key to the successful design of the new facility. These relationships between classrooms and programs in the school define the programmatic, functional, spatial, and environmental requirements of the educational facility and become the basis for the design at the next phase. Countryside School depends on adjacencies for communication, collaboration, flexible grouping, and teaming. Providing learning areas both in and outside classrooms for small group work, individual tutorial spaces, and additional instructional break out rooms are critical in a school with a focus on universally designed classrooms, requiring specialized instruction and an emphasis on inclusive practices.

Community is a core value among students, staff and parents. Countryside School is a warm and inviting place for children, staff and families. The PTO and parent volunteers are actively involved in before, during and after school programs. Countryside requires a welcoming main office and community arrival space that accommodates the high morning influx of families who walk or get dropped off by parents at school arrival, as well as the active dismissal procedures. The students, faculty and parent community value and require a space for the entire school to gather, both as a common space to gather and celebrate learning and as an area to spotlight the arts through assemblies and performances. A functional dining facility with a reasonable capacity is a need of the school. After school, we provide space for a K-5 extended day program that operates until 6:00 p.m. Up to 100 students participate in this program on a regular basis Monday through Friday.

The Countryside School is a relationship-oriented community that practices and values inclusive partnerships and mutual support in all aspects of the school community. This is the overall spirit of the school that will drive the design of the facility.

Security & Visual Access Requirements

The Newton Public Schools have robust safety and security systems and protocols in place to maintain secure buildings and safe school communities. The district works very closely with our city partners - Newton Fire, Police, and Health and Human Services - on prevention, preparedness and response to a wide range of scenarios.

Recent Safety Updates

From 2018 to 2019, the Newton Public Schools safety team worked in partnership with the Newton Fire Department, Newton Police Department, the Newton Teachers Association and the City of Newton to update the district-wide emergency operations plan. The team worked closely with Preparedness LLC, a nationally-recognized security and risk assessment firm, to review the existing emergency operations plan and update it to reflect current requirements and best practices for school safety.

The updated, research-based emergency operations plan provides guidance to administrators and staff for the most foreseeable types of emergencies. Importantly, the plan includes not only pre-existing protocols for evacuation, shelter-in-place, and lockdown, but added a specific “hostile event” response. The plan incorporates an options-based response to an active shooter scenario, similar to the well-known ALICE Protocol (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate), as well as research-informed learning from analysis of real active shooter events. New tools, including online and hard copy handbooks as well as classroom posters, were developed to guide staff and students in the event of an emergency.

In addition, grants from the federal government have allowed the Newton Public Schools to implement additional security and safety improvements, including updating shades on classroom windows, locks on classroom doors, and keyless entry to buildings for staff. A two-year grant to the Newton Police Department, called Secure our Schools, funded security cameras at our high schools, as well as replacement of exterior doors, and installation of emergency and exterior lighting. An additional grant has also allowed cameras to be installed at our four middle schools, as well as in our new elementary buildings and in key external areas at other schools as needed. NPS continues to work closely with the police department on this type of safety and security measure.

NPS Safety Teams

The Newton Public Schools organizes safety teams at each of our school buildings and at the district level to prepare for and coordinate response to crisis situations and other emergencies. The district safety team is responsible for updating and disseminating emergency policy and procedures, training materials, and assembling to determine a course of action in times of citywide crisis. The team meets monthly and includes representatives from the different school levels and roles, school nursing staff, as well as the Newton Police Department, Newton Fire Department, NPS psychology department, and other school and community-based mental health professionals.

Each individual school also has a safety team that includes administrators, teachers, and other staff from that school. The team meets periodically throughout the year to review procedures and plan for emergency response. The school safety teams also are convened as needed to evaluate and respond to challenging community situations, plan next steps and offer support to children, parents, and staff. The district safety team offers resources for school-based safety teams to refine their practice, and also supports specific school teams with resources and staffing as needed in the event of a crisis.

Safety Training and Drills

The district has established protocols for addressing a range of crises and emergencies. Each fall, new school leaders are trained in district-specific safety procedures, and all school leaders participate in a refresher training with specific areas of focus for the year. School staff are trained annually in emergency procedures at each school to ensure that all educators, as well as support staff, are prepared to handle any emergency. Each school has supplemental emergency procedures specific to its site and facilities that are part of the annual training. In addition, staff review the emergency procedures poster that is posted in every classroom, as well as the entire emergency operations plan document which is available to all staff as a part of our internal emergency preparedness resources.

Each year, staff and students in all schools practice the full range of drills for our emergency procedures and protocols. As is done for all safety drills, the practice is tailored to grade levels, using developmentally appropriate language and discussion topics. Scripts are provided for classroom teachers that provide specific examples of developmentally- appropriate language to use in explaining the purpose and procedures of each day. Drills each year include evacuation, shelter-in-place/lockdown/hostile event, and bus evacuation drills.

Most NPS schools complete a full series of these drills in one day as part of an annual safety day in the fall, with a focus on the continuum of response to a safety event and the importance of coordination and communication. In addition, our school nurses also organize drills for our internal Medical Emergency Response Teams, who practice how to respond to a non-responsive individual or other medical emergency. The date of the most recent Medical Emergency Response Plan submission to DESE for Countryside and all NPS schools is August 17, 2022.

Communication Systems

The Newton Public Schools works closely with the staff in our Office of Information Technology to ensure up-to-date communication tools are available to support our emergency response systems. NPS utilizes the SchoolMessenger communication system, which allows us to alert staff and families through a phone call, email, or text message in an emergency. We are able to communicate with families, faculty, and staff 24 hours a day and in multiple languages. SchoolMessenger utilizes data (phone and email address) entered into the district's student information system, Aspen. Families also have the choice to opt out of this messaging.

Schools are also equipped with public address systems to allow for announcements to be made in the building, and building administrators also have “walkie-talkie” systems that allow for direct communication with one another. Newton has also installed hard-wire radio connections between each building and the City of Newton dispatch center, which allows for an emergency call to be made in the event of a hostile event, cutting the time of response for first responders. Annual training is now provided for our main office staff in communicating with the dispatch center in a crisis. The district also offers a 24-hour crisis phone for school and district leaders that is staffed by a highly trained psychologist to support and coordinate responses to events outside of school hours impacting our community.

Telephone systems at schools include the ability to dial 911 directly. Phone systems in schools that rely on internet connectivity also include backup, traditional copper phone lines to specifically route emergency calls. Staff and students are also encouraged to enable WiFi calling on their cell phones to mitigate cell coverage issues in buildings.

NPS Facilities

School leaders and safety teams work closely with the NPS facilities staff to ensure that our buildings meet all safety requirements and are maintained to support our safety protocols and procedures. All middle school and elementary school doors are locked during the day with only one point of entry. Visitors are granted entry to the building through a buzzer system. At the high school level, upper class students are allowed to leave campus and return during the school day when not assigned to classes, but only the main entrances are accessible during the day, and these are adjacent to the main offices in both high schools. Additional key card and passcode entrances have been created to adapt the architecture of the schools to a more secure environment. Parents/families and visitors are required to enter through the main entrance doors and sign in at the office, which is an expectation across all schools PreK-12.

Countryside Elementary School requires a safe main driveway entrance access to the school site with safe secondary access for emergency needs. Countryside Elementary School also requires:

- Access Control utilizing a security card access device by authorized staff
- Visual Security of the main entrance utilizing a video monitoring system that will be monitored at the school secretary's desk.
- Safe, well-lit parking for staff
- Safe, well-lit parking for visitors in close proximity to the building
- Safe vehicular student drop off and pick up areas without crossing traffic (called a "blue zone" in Newton)
- Safe pathways for pedestrians and bicyclists coming from varied directions to the school
- Safe bus access systems that do not interfere with drop off and pick up traffic
- Safe recess grounds and play fields that can be properly supervised by staff and protected from vehicle traffic
- Visual access of the driveway and parking lots
- Safe access for kitchen, facility and shipping / receiving separate from school traffic to the main entrance
- Safe and appropriate access to the perimeter of the building and play fields

Day in the life of Student

SAMPLE DAILY STUDENT SCHEDULE	
Activity or Subject	Program Details and Educational Benefit
8:10 Arrival	School starts at 8:10 AM
8:10-8:30 AM Morning Meeting	Morning meeting welcomes all students, builds connection and community, and prepares students for the day ahead.
8:30-9:10 Specials	<p>All students in grades K-5 attend Specials classes in the following areas: Library, Art, Music, and Physical Education (PE).</p> <p>Library: Develops students' information literacy and skills to access and utilize information in all formats including current and emerging technologies.</p> <p>Art: Provides experiences in a variety of visual art media and techniques while developing artistic skills. Students increase their knowledge of art history and develop art appreciation.</p> <p>Music: Students learn fundamentals of music through a sequential curriculum, which develops skills and knowledge in music performance, appreciation and history.</p> <p>PE: Encourages an active, healthy lifestyle, and positive choices</p>
9:10–10:20 Math	<p>70 Minute Math Block using the Investigations 3 Curriculum which is aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks incorporating the Common Core Standards.</p> <p>This curriculum incorporates teacher-guided exploration of mathematical ideas, individual practice, class discussion, reasoning about mathematical concepts and solving non-routine problems.</p>
10:20–11:50 Reading	<p>90 minutes of Literacy Instruction aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks</p> <p>Specific instructional components at each grade level include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary: interactive read aloud, shared reading, guided reading (including skills based and strategy lessons), independent reading, phonemic awareness, and phonics / word study. • Intermediate: interactive read aloud, shared reading, guided reading (including strategy lessons, book clubs and literature circles), independent reading, and word study.
11:50–12:10 Lunch	<p>There are three lunch blocks. Each lunch block is 40 minutes, 20 minutes to eat lunch and 20 minutes for recess.</p> <p>11:30-12:10 (grades K and 5). While one grade eats, the other has recess. They swap at 11:50.</p> <p>12:15-12:55 (grades 1 and 2)</p> <p>1:00-1:40 (grades 3 and 4)</p>

12:10–12:30 Recess	Students go outside for recess or play indoors in instances of inclement weather. Recess provides students with the opportunity to engage in structured and unstructured play activities and physical exercise, socialize with peers, and take a break from academic tasks.
12:30–1:45 Writing	<p>Explicit writing instruction occurs using Writing Units of Study, Teachers’ College Reading and Writing Project; common writing prompts and scoring methods that include focused experiences in narrative, opinion, and informational, and both written and oral feedback from teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All grades: authorship experiences that emphasize conferring, revising, editing, publishing and celebrating creative efforts ● Intermediate: focus lessons on a variety of rhetorical and stylistic issues including specific narrative and expository techniques, planning and organizing, rich language, elaboration; serious examination of sentence structure and sentence boundaries; emphasis on writing as a tool to enhance learning and thinking in all subject areas
1:45-2:15 Academic Intervention and Enrichment Block	Students are flexibly grouped to receive targeted additional support to master grade level standards. Enrichment groups help students who have already mastered grade level standards to deepen and extend their learning. Lessons designed to foster social emotional competencies are provided during this time, as well.
2:15–2:50 Science and Social Studies	<p>History/Social Science: Students engage in a history/social sciences curriculum that, wherever possible, integrates with the informational skills components of the Mass Frameworks for English Language Arts. The curriculum provides age-appropriate experiences for students to view and come to understand themselves; their family and cultural heritage; the United States and the world; and the relationship between and among them. Throughout the history program, students are asked to explore the contributions and experiences of different peoples, past and present, appreciate the diverse sources of these contributions, and apply this knowledge as citizens of the United States.</p> <p>Science: Teachers implement a hands-on science and engineering curriculum. There are typically three units at each grade level. These units address standards for the following domains: life science, physical science, earth and space science, and engineering.</p> <p>Instructional components include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Investigation - Pairs and groups of students work with a variety of materials to make sense of science phenomena. ● Demonstration - Teachers model science phenomena for the whole class. ● Observation - Students observe scientific models, and living materials, including crabs, butterflies, and wood frogs. ● Reading - Information texts are used to deepen understanding, through teacher read-alouds and paired reading.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recording scientific ideas - Students explain their understanding of scientific phenomena through writing, using drawn models to enhance their descriptions.
2:50 Dismissal	Students are dismissed at 2:50

Week in the life of Student

SAMPLE WEEKLY STUDENT SCHEDULE	
Weekly Activity or Subject	Program Details and Educational Benefit
Specials	<p>Library, Art, Music, and Physical Education classes are included in all students' schedules to provide a well-rounded curriculum that supports skill development as summarized in the daily schedule above.</p> <p>Library Grades K, 3, 4, & 5 have one 30-minute library class each week Grades 1 & 2 have one 45-minute library class each week</p> <p>Music K-5 have one 30 minute general music class each week Grade 3 has one 30-minute recorder class each week Grades 4 & 5 have one 45 minute chorus class each week</p> <p>Visual Art Kindergarten has one 45-minute art class each week Grades 1-5 have one 55-minute art class each week</p> <p>Physical Education, Health and Wellness Kindergarten have two 45-minute classes each week Grades 1-5 have two 30-minute classes each week</p>
Math	<p>5x per week, 70 Minute Math Block / 30 Minutes of Intervention</p> <p>This allows students to work towards meeting grade level benchmarks as detailed above (See Sample Daily Schedule).</p>
Literacy	<p>5x per week for 100 minutes of Reading Instruction per day. 4x45 minutes per week for 180 minutes of Writing Instruction.</p> <p>This allows students to work towards meeting grade level benchmarks as detailed above (See Sample Daily Schedule).</p>
Recess	<p>Students have recess 5x per week for 35 minutes daily (15 minute morning recess and 20 minutes at lunch). This provides down time for students and a time to play.</p>
Science and Social Studies	<p>Science and Social Studies 2.5 hours per week for each subject.</p> <p>This allows students to work towards meeting grade level benchmarks as detailed above (See Sample Daily Schedule).</p>