

What's to gain, what's at risk?

The continued excellence of the Wayland Public Schools requires an expansion and modernization of Wayland High School.

Failing to act will lead to degradation of that education and the value that it adds to the community.

The Wayland School Committee

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Wayland High School: Educational Needs

Q: Why are we looking at a renovation and expansion project for the High School to be completed by 2007?

As the companion document and presentation, "Wayland High School: The Next 50 Years," outlines, the current high school will not meet the needs placed on it by the system for three key reasons: (1) physical plant shortcomings, (2) increasing enrollment, and (3) changing educational imperatives. This piece spells out the educational need. Additional information is available on the overall project and the change in capacity of the current buildings over time at www.waylandschoolcommittee.org.

Q: What are the main areas of educational need?

The un-met educational needs span the breadth of the curriculum. In alphabetical order, they are the following; each is discussed in turn.

1. Athletics
2. Common space
3. Faculty collaboration
4. Foreign language
5. Humanities: English and History
6. Mathematics
7. Performing arts
8. Science
9. Special education
10. Technology

Q: What are the athletic needs?

A growing population will create a demand for additional teams and sporting options, requiring additional fields and possibly gym space. The move towards a Wellness model will also add pressure to upgrade facilities.

Q: What are the common space needs?

There is an obvious well documented need for additional cafeteria space, to avoid over-crowding and early lunches). What is less well know is a lack of conference room and reference center space. These spaces serve as student government meeting places as well as small study stations. The need is to reinstall common meeting spaces that are equipped with technology and adequate stations for students to study and work.

Q: What are the faculty collaboration needs?

In a new school, each department should be housed together. Alternatively, the entire faculty might be situated together for reasons of communication. In either case, it is desirable to have accompanying student work space. The current faculty spaces resemble rabbit warrens and do not promote collaboration, either peer or student, at the highest level.

Q: What are the foreign language needs?

The needs here are for expanded classroom space and ones that are acoustically sound (to promote oral proficiency). Class sizes should be reduced to help reach objectives in oral proficiency. The educational plan calls for 8 to 10 classrooms, ideally clustered by language. Current language teachers are required to teach in multiple classrooms, often in non-language buildings, which is disruptive to the learning of a foreign language. There is a strong need for an updated Language Lab that permits far more individual student practice on oral skills. The program would also benefit from the inclusion of new languages, particularly Asian languages, which would increase the need for classrooms.

Q: What are the humanities needs?

The need is for classrooms that are not occupied 100% of the day. In an ideal world, there would be classroom per teacher (currently there is the equivalent of 20 teachers in humanities) but even 15 to 16 classrooms in these areas would be an improvement. The 750 sq feet state guideline makes sense for humanities, and includes enough room for technology, books, displays, and so on; current classrooms are often less than 500 square feet. As with other disciplines, there is far too little storage space and access to utilities.

Q: What are the mathematics needs?

The same needs as in humanities suggest approximately 8 new classrooms. The incorporation of technology is critical here, with the goal of being able to handle 25 students (possibly in groups of 2) per computer. This model requires slightly larger classroom space or the availability of two computer labs dedicated to math.

Q: What are the performing arts needs?

The Little Theater does not have adequate space to support the current size of Band or Orchestra. There is a need for more Practice Rooms and additional Band/Orchestra space including instrument storage. In addition, proper acoustics drive the need for high ceilings. The Drama department has an inadequate backstage area, which should be expanded to accommodate set preparation and storage. The Art space (ceramics, painting, drawing, and so on) is currently housed inadequately in the old Home Economics room—more space is required to serve this program. Finally, the waste treatment facilities are suitable for the type of waste produced in ceramics and other art courses.

Q: What are the science needs?

Science labs need to be updated and two more need to be constructed—ideally there would be 3 to 4 dedicated labs per science specialty area—biology, chemistry, physics—for a total of 9 to 12 labs overall. The update includes new chemistry hoods and facilities for microlabs (which would ease the load on the environment and the school's treatment center required by state mandates). These labs should be built in workstations to industry approved work standards, and each station should have adequate technology (this include ability to manipulate probes and complete online labs). The school is still operating with 1960s lab technology in a subject area that has taken quantum leaps. All of these issues are further compounded by the fact square footage per lab student is not in compliance with modern lab safety requirements.

Q: What are the special education needs?

This need did not exist in 1970 and modern requirements necessitate entirely new uses of space. Currently, we must inefficiently divide this program into two spaces to account for growth in this area while still accommodating students in our mainstream program with significant cost savings compared with outside placement.

Q: What are the technology needs?

The exact configuration for the future is uncertain, there is no doubt that the current facility cannot meet the needs of students and that this space cannot be simply retrofitted. Current on-line access is slow and limited and needs to be modernized.