



Leicester Public Schools

Knowledge ~ Skills ~ Character

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INTRODUCTION

Leicester Public School Mission Statement

The mission of the Leicester Public Schools is to engage every child in a rigorous, student-centered learning in a safe and technology-rich environment. We strive to equip students with 21st century skills to meet the challenge of change in the global community in which we live, allowing them to thrive as productive members of our community. In order to accomplish our mission, staff, parents and students will work together through open lines of communication and a collaboration of effort and trust.

Recognized as its greatest asset, the Leicester Public Schools is a learning community that functions with cohesive and unified goals that are understood throughout the community and by all stakeholders. All areas of the school system operate through transparent communication and a collaborative mindset in order to provide the most effective and safe learning environment for our students in which they will grow and learn. The Town of Leicester has a rich history of supporting education, and it continues to this day. According to a local historian, “The first school was built in 1738, but some classes were held inside the town meeting house as early as 1719”. The Leicester Public Schools embraces the challenges of the future while relying on the rich tradition of education excellence.

Our vision of Leicester Middle/Elementary is a single building that houses two independent schools. These two schools while under the same physical roof, would operate separately while sharing key spaces. Each school would have its own identity and name, Principal, teaching staff, and pickup and drop off locations. We envision a design that puts the shared spaces at the center of the facility, while using design elements such as grade level defined wings to limit interactions between students of varying age groups.

Leicester Middle School

The Town of Leicester and the Leicester Public Schools have worked strategically to establish schools that engage the student, parent and the entire community in the education of our students. A successful Leicester Middle School educational program will support this strategic planning while also taking careful note of the rich town history, culture and innovation. The school will be educationally innovative, historically respectful and sensitive to the needs of the community. A successful Leicester Middle School project will strengthen our educational practice for project-based learning, allow for continued growth in our Foreign Language, Music and Arts departments, as well as embrace our needs for our developing STEM Program. The Leicester Middle School environment is already a successful example of how collaboration among staff can work together to provide a highly successful and individual education delivery to all students. The current environment at Leicester Middle School utilizes cross-discipline instruction, hands-on activities, workshop model instruction, social-emotional learning techniques and engaging classroom strategies to fully engage students into every class. Offering a large variety and diversity of after-school clubs and activities, these extended learning opportunities are targeted to assist students engage in their studies as well as build positive connections with staff.

The educational visioning narrative and the educational program information contained herein is representative of the discussions, collaboration and desired goals developed by various stakeholders comprised of parents, faculty and community members. It defines the current and future direction for educational delivery within the Leicester Middle School environment. It includes an analysis and understanding of the various attributes that make Leicester a significant and historic town for education. The program incorporates 21st Century middle

school design patterns and will continue to build upon the innovation already taking place. It also includes a sensitive approach to the culture of Leicester where students, parents and community members can come together in a harmonious environment of confidence, respect, trust, honesty and academic excellence.

Leicester Elementary School

A strong elementary foundation is key to a successful educational journey. At the Leicester Elementary School, we are committed to providing a safe, supportive, and challenging learning environment where all students have the opportunity to grow academically, socially, and emotionally to meet success in an ever-changing world. Our goal is to help each student develop an enthusiasm for learning, a respect for self and others, and the skills to become critical thinkers and creative independent problem solvers.

In order to accomplish our vision for our youngest learners, a successful building project will support our workshop model of instruction, hands-on learning activities, social-emotional learning techniques and will provide a space that allows for collaboration among both students and staff.

Town History

Purchased in 1686 by a group of businessmen from Roxbury, Leicester was incorporated in February 1713. The town was first called Towtaid, which was the name given to this place by the Nipmuc group that had sold the land, and later Strawberry Hill since wild strawberries grew in great quantities. The name Leicester was finally settled upon, after Leicester, England where the father of the first selectman, Thomas Green, had originated. Leicester is known as the home of the minutemen as at a Committee of Safety meeting in 1774, Leicester's Colonel William Henshaw declared that "we must have companies of men ready to march upon a minute's notice".

The Town Of Leicester is a community that epitomizes the farm to factory movement which occurred in the early part of the industrial revolution. As mills were being built all over New England where water power was available, Leicester began to construct larger and better mills to replace the small pre-industrial mills that dotted the landscape. Leicester, beginning in the mid 1780s began a focus on the manufacture of hand cards, tools used in the making of cloth. When Samuel Slater was building his Pawtucket Mill, he could not get his carding machine to operate. He then began to work with Pliny Earle of Leicester, who was engaged in the production of hand cards and known locally as a mechanical tinkerer. Earle built Slater's carding machine and Slater's Mill began its production, signaling the beginning of America's Industrial Revolution.

By the time of the Civil War, Leicester was an active and vibrant place. There were carding and textile mills operating in villages of Leicester Center, Greenville, Cherry Valley, Rochdale, Mannville and Lakeside. When the war broke out between the states, those who made a living from the mills did not want to see their livelihood destroyed. It is also for this reason that the community did not openly embrace the abolition movement that was sweeping the area. Wealthy mill owners did not want to see their textile supplies disappear and thus did not support the movement. When one of the town's prominent citizens became deeply involved with the movement, a conflict broiled in the community.

Rev. Samuel May was pastor of the Unitarian Church, a position he was asked to vacate when mill owning parishioners felt he was devoting too much time to his position as Secretary of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. May had worked with many prominent abolitionists such as Lucy Stone and Abby Kelly Foster. May's home on the east end of the town common is a confirmed site on the Underground Railroad. After May's death,

Booker T. Washington along with members of the Tuskegee Institute delivered a speech on May's work on the steps of the Unitarian Church that May had been asked to leave.

The 1880s saw the beginning of the decline of industry in Leicester. At the height of the industrial revolution, one-third of all hand and machine cards made in North America were produced in Leicester. Other famous industrialists such as Elias Howe as well as Henry Graton and Joseph Knight also got their beginnings in Leicester's carding industry. However, the new cheap labor available in the south forced many companies to sell their businesses which were then closed and moved south. Yet, most of the mill villages remained active until well after the Second World War. Village pride ran high, each remaining staunchly independent, with their own fire companies, schools and sports teams. The end of Leicester's textile industry came in 1991 with the closing of Worcester Spinning & Finishing in Cherry Valley, and although the industry itself is gone, there are constant reminders in the form of mills and housing. These are the legacies of Leicester storied past. This past, along with the existence of the old mills, and the mill houses, and village constructs is why Leicester is part of the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor.

Leicester currently is a town with a population of approximately 11,000, of which 1,900 are school age, and 2,200 are senior citizens. Although the majority of the residents commute to work in other cities or towns, there are over 300 businesses in town, including several restaurants, several working farms, three golf courses, two Frisbee golf courses, a nursing and rehabilitation facility, gymnastics training, numerous personal and professional service businesses, numerous other small businesses, plus Tractor Supply, Inc, and Walmart. Becker College has an active and growing campus in town. There is a section of town around the Town Common that has been designated a Historic District, including the May House on the Becker Campus.

GRADE AND SCHOOL CONFIGURATION

Leicester Public Schools provides educational programs for students in Prekindergarten through Grade 12. As of October 1st, 2017, there were 1,605 students enrolled across the four schools in Leicester. Primary school serves grades Prekindergarten through Grade 2, while Memorial School serves grades Grade 3 through Grade 5. Leicester Middle School serves Grade 6 through Grade 8 and Leicester High School serves Grade 9 through Grade 12.

Leicester Middle School

The current enrollment of Leicester Middle School is 366 students. Serving grades 6, 7 and 8. Leicester Middle School strives to utilize a teaming approach. In February 2019, the Leicester School Committee voted to reconfigure the schools for the 2019-2020 school year. Beginning in August 2019, Leicester Middle School will have a projected enrollment of approximately 500 students, spanning grades 5 through 8. All students are taught by core subject teachers for Mathematics, English Language Arts, Science and Social Studies using the middle school model of switching teachers and classes. In a building that has essentially two wings for four grades, the school will essentially have a 5th and 6th grade wing and a 7th and 8th grade wing. The current structure of the building, does limit these wings as students who are taking part in Intervention, Related Art Classes, Enrichment classes and various special classes, will have to travel outside of their wing. In addition to the four core subjects, students also take a combination of Spanish, French, Band, Chorus, World Language and Culture, Health, Physical Education, STEM (Design and Modeling 5th and 6th Grade, Automation and Robotics 7th, Flight and Space 8th Grade or Computer Science for Innovators and Makers and App Creators 7th and 8th

Grade) and Literacy. These courses are offered in 45 or 90 Day Increments with the exception of Band and Chorus which are offered for the full year. Response to Intervention Classes are staffed by teachers that teacher specialized Reading or Mathematics classes to targeted students based upon a district screener.

Students are heterogeneously grouped with the exception of an advanced Math class and ELA class offered in the 6th, 7th and 8th grade. Students who are placed into the advanced Math class learn at a faster pace so that as an 8th grade student, they have the option of taking an Algebra I course, putting them on pace to Calculus in High School. Students who are placed in the advanced ELA class learn at a faster pace with the ability to have them enroll into the High School Advanced Placement course. Most special education students are included into the mainstream courses with support, while all English Language Learners are mainstreamed with support. Some special education students who are unable to be mainstreamed are placed into the Living and Learning Program which is designed to teach students how to integrate into the community through various ways such as shopping, cooking, laundry and other functional skills.

Proposed:

The ideal middle school design would separate students by grade level, allowing for controlled transitions, but will ensure that there is a level of connectivity and collaboration among grade levels. The design would also ensure that non core classes (Spanish, French, Band, Chorus, World Language and Culture, Health, STEM and Physical Education) are centrally located. Space for administrative offices and the guidance services will ideally be located in a central part of the building for easy access. Collaborative time is provided to the department of teachers each day to allow for lesson planning, conferencing on the needs of students, and analysis of performance and curriculum data. Teachers also use this time to observe each other as a form of collaboration. This practice has allowed for open communication between all teachers.

The Leicester School Department has invested a lot of time in considering the best configuration that cater to the specific emotional, social and educational needs of the unique middle school population. The following are some of the advantages that have been realized within the Leicester school community as part of the 5-8 configuration model.

- The 5-8 model extends to the grade five students much needed support services such as foreign language opportunities, STEM education, art, music and other specialities that are a part of the middle school curriculum that are not received on a regular basis within the elementary model.
- The 5-8 model will provide a longer grade span of years within the same school, reducing the number of transitions while also enhancing the ability of teachers to work vertically to increase student achievement.
- The 5-8 model enhances collegiality and improves communication and collaboration between staff and families while offering a state-of-the-art facility to bridge the school and the community.
- This 5-8 model will allow the middle school to reduce the gap between elementary and high school by creating two academy style learning atmospheres for grades five and six, and grades seven and eight; that will phase in the changes from an elementary setting to a high school setting.

For these reasons, and many more, the proposed educational program is aligned with the 5-8 model and will continue on this path as part of the Town and School Department’s strategic plan.

Leicester Elementary School

The Leicester Elementary School is located on the main public school campus. The building lacks cooperative learning space for students and adequate space for supporting students with social-emotional needs. All classrooms are self-contained with the classroom teacher providing instruction in all core subject areas to include English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. In addition to the core subjects, students attend a special subject class each day of either Physical Education, music, art, library media, or health. An intervention team, that is staffed by two part-time teachers, 1 full time teacher and tutors. provide targeted gap filling instruction to identified students based on district screeners.

Proposed:

The ideal elementary school design would allow for one cohesive elementary community, with controlled transitions that ensure that there is a level of connectivity and collaboration among grade levels with adequate space provided for tier II and III academic and behavioral supports. The design would also ensure that non core classes (Health, STEM and Physical Education) are centrally located. Space for administrative offices and related services will ideally be located in a central part of the building for easy access as well.

As a result of the desire to provide a cohesive student centered learning environment, the Leicester Public Schools recently reconfigured to a model that brings us closer to our elementary building vision. This reconfiguration included shifting grade five to the middle school to allow fifth-grade students the opportunities afforded within the middle school setting and shifting to a K to 4 elementary model. This model will:

- Provide a longer grade span of years within the same school, reducing the number of transitions while also enhancing the ability of teachers to work vertically to increase student achievement.
- Enhance collegiality and improve communication and collaboration between staff and families with a new building offering a state-of-the-art facility.
- Allow the creation of two learning atmospheres. A preschool to grade 3 early learning setting with 4th grade being the transitional year that will phase in the changes from an elementary setting to a middle school setting.

CLASS SIZE POLICIES

Research shows that a lower teacher/student ratio enhances the educational process, particularly in the lower elementary grades. Primary grade (K-2) students require more individual attention than students in the upper elementary grades. Therefore, the recommended class size in the elementary and secondary schools shall be determined by grade level with exceptions made for classes in certain subject areas, the need for specialized instruction, and the availability of classroom space and equipment for the particular course.

It is the intent of the Leicester School Committee to observe the following class size guidelines:

Grades	Target Class Size Avg.	Max. Class Size Avg.	Min. Class Size Avg.
Kindergarten	20:1	22:1	18:1
Grades 1-2	22:1	24:1	20:1

Grades 3-5	25:1	27:1	22:1
Grades 6-8	25:1	27:1	22:1
Grades 9-12	25:1	27:1*	**

Leicester Middle School

In the 2018-2019 school year, Leicester Middle School had 30 of 72 core classes below 20 students per section and 68 of 72 core classes at or below the target number of 25 students per section. 71 of 72 core classes had 27 or fewer students per section, leaving only 1 section with 28 students in each section. These policies and practices are anticipated to continue for the foreseeable future.

Leicester Elementary School

In the 2018-2019 school year, the Leicester Primary School had 33 students enrolled in the 3-year-old, preschool program and 51 students enrolled in the 4-year-old, preschool program. Student schedules varied between 2 half days a week to 5 full days a week. We had 4 sections of Kindergarten with an average class size of 21 students, 5 sections of 1st grade with an average class size of 22 students and 4 sections of 2nd grade with an average class size of 23.

In the 2018-2019 school year, Memorial School has 5 sections of 3rd grade with an average class size of 19 students, 5 sections of 4th grade with an average class size of 21 students, and 5 sections of 5th grade with an average class size of 25 students.

SCHOOL SCHEDULING

Leicester Middle School

The school schedule is revisited annually and adjustments are made based upon enrollment, student and programming needs, staffing levels, and contractual agreements around educator preparation and professional development. The student day is from 7:30 a.m. to 2:10 p.m. each day. Students begin their day with a 10 minute homeroom period where morning announcements are given and attendance is taken. The schedule beginning for the 2019-2020 school year for each student will consist of a 50-55 minute periods for each class with a 25 minute advisory period for each student. A student schedule will consist of taking the four core classes, English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies along with Related Arts class and an Elective class. All students will take a 45 day Physical Education course, 45 Day Health and Wellness course and a 90 STEM course as their Related Arts class. Using the Project Lead the Way curriculum (PLTW), students in Grade 5 and 6 take the Design and Modeling course, while students in Grade 7 take the Automation and Robotics course and students in Grade 8 take the Flight and Space course. Students in Grade 7 and 8 will also have the opportunity to replace their STEM course of Automation and Robotics and Flight and Space with a new course of Computer Science for Innovators and Makers. Students who take this course in the 7th grade during the 2019-2020 school year, will also then have the option of taking a course called App Creators for their 8th grade year. Our goal is to build out two pathways for STEM. One pathway will have an engineering focus while the second pathway will have a computer science focus. Response To Intervention (RTI) courses are offered in a variety of ways during the elective period. These courses include support in Reading, Math and

Academic Support and are assigned based upon a district wide screener or recommendations by the IEP team or Student Teacher Assistance Team. Scheduling priority is given to Special Education students and ELL students along with instrumental support. All classes are heterogeneously grouped except for advanced offerings in Math/ELA.

With the current schedule, administration is able to create a schedule that offers teachers a 50 minute preparatory period each day as well as a common planning period with their department two to three times per week. Teachers use this time to plan lessons vertically within their department, review student work and data as well as observe educational practices of their colleagues. Well-planned instruction and assessment is a priority of the Leicester Middle School staff and all stakeholders benefit from the time to meet and develop the differentiated learning criteria needed to present the highest quality of education to all of our students.

Proposed:

With the addition of the Grade 5 and the configuration to a 5-8 school, many of the current scheduling features would remain the same. Students in Grade 5-8 would be heterogeneously mixed and would follow the same schedule they are currently following for the 2019-2020 school year. With the construction of a new building, teachers that teach all students such as Physical Education, Health, STEM, Foreign Language, Band, Chorus would be centrally located so that instruction time is not lost with transitioning of students.

Leicester Elementary School

The school schedule is revisited annually and adjustments are made based upon enrollment, student and programming needs, staffing levels, and contractual agreements around educator preparation and professional development. The student day is from 8:15 a.m. to 2:40 p.m. Students begin their day with a 15 minute morning meeting that builds and maintains classroom community. The daily schedule consists of a 75 minute Math block, a 120 minute ELA block, a 30 minute Science block, a 30 minute Social Studies block and a 40 minute special subjects block. Intervention support is provided to each grade within the ELA or Math block with identified students supported for 30 minutes in a separate setting for gap filling and/or reteaching of grade level strategies.

Screeners are used school wide three times per year, at the beginning of the year, middle and end-of-year after each 60 day trimester. The assessments are designed to screen students in their skills in Mathematics and in Reading. Identified students are scheduled into RTI Math or RTI Reading intervention groups. The structure of the RTI program is to provide students with an appropriate intervention and as progress is made, they transition out of the program.

Our current schedule does not allow for a common planning period within the school day. Teachers use after school contractual time for grade level meeting to plan lessons and review student work and data. Well-planned instruction and assessment is a priority of the Leicester Elementary School staff and all stakeholders would benefit from the time to meet and develop the differentiated learning criteria needed to present the highest quality of education to all of our students.

Proposed:

In a PreK to 4 school, many of the current scheduling features would remain the same. Classrooms would remain self-contained with an opportunity for teaming in Grade 4 with teacher movement or student movement.

The schedule must also include appropriate staff planning and collaboration time within the established school day.

TEACHING METHODOLOGY AND STRUCTURE

Leicester Middle School

Leicester Middle School’s core subjects include Mathematics, Science, English Language Arts and Social Studies. Non-core subjects include Foreign Language, Band, Chorus, Art, Health, STEM, Physical Education, RTI Reading Support and RTI Math Support.

Academic Classrooms Grades 5-8

Content Area	Grade Level	Time on Learning (Weekly)	Number of Staff	Teaching Methodology
English Language Arts	5-8	250 Minutes	5	Whole class and small group instruction. Workshop model, classroom library, Chromebooks for peer editing and individual instruction
Mathematics	5-8	250 Minutes	5	Whole class and small group instruction. Workshop model, Chromebooks for online instruction
Science	5-8	250 Minutes	5	Whole class and collaborative groups, lab setting, stations, Chromebooks for virtual labs
Social Studies	5-8	250 Minutes	4	Whole class and collaborative groups, Chromebooks for research

Foreign Language	5-8	250 Minutes	2	Whole class and collaborative work. Interactive games, Chromebooks for research and translating
Art	5-6	250 Minutes	1	Whole group, small group and individual
Health	5-8	250 Minutes	1	Whole group and collaborative group
Physical Education	5-8	250 Minutes	1	Whole group, small group
STEM	5-8	250 Minutes	2	Whole group and small group, project based learning through PLTW
RTI Math and Reading	5-8	125-250 Minutes	1.5	Small group and individual learning, Chromebooks for instruction

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS:

Literacy standards for writing, grammar, and vocabulary are directly aligned to the MA Curriculum Frameworks for ELA and Literacy. Language Arts teachers plan instruction around common themes, providing students with a strong connection between what they are reading and writing about in class. Every middle school language arts teacher uses a common resource aligned to the new state standards to develop lessons and assessments that support the theme or unit. The writing and language standards from the Common Core drive the planning of instruction, assignments and assessments. STAR assessments are given to students four times a year as a progress monitoring tool and screener.

MATHEMATICS:

The middle school math curriculum is aligned to the 2011 MA Curriculum Framework. Teachers follow a common pacing and alignment guide to plan their year-long learning goals for students. Each classroom is equipped with materials and resources from a common math program: Big Ideas in Mathematics in grades 6-8 and EnVisions Math in grade 5. Teachers and students have access to textbooks, as well as online digital resources and assessments. Every math classroom is equipped with a computer, projector, and interactive whiteboard for interactive whole class lessons. STAR assessments are given to students four times a year as a progress monitoring tool and screener.

SCIENCE:

Leicester Middle School science teachers develop and implement units, projects, and assessments based on the current science, technology, and engineering state standards. Hands-on activities, small group collaborative projects, and lab experiments drive the daily curriculum. The use of video clips, online demonstrations, and media-rich presentations are growing in popularity in middle school classrooms. This process is referred to as the workshop model.

SOCIAL STUDIES:

The curriculum is based on the current History and Social Science standards outlined in the MA Curriculum Frameworks. US History, Geography, Ancient Civilizations and US Civics are the major themes highlighted throughout middle school. Primary sources, periodicals, virtual tours, field trips, web-based research, and teacher-created lessons all contribute to the design and implementation of the social studies curriculum. In both system and site-based professional development, teachers share best practice and supplemental resources. The social studies teacher is often asked to participate in the design of interdisciplinary units that connect history to current events, and provide students the opportunity to write persuasive essays or support a social commentary on community, state, or global issues.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE:

Cultural awareness, conversational skills, vocabulary, basic grammar, and writing skills drive the instructional focus for each language that is offered. The student learning outcomes are aligned to the current MA Curriculum Framework for Foreign Language. Currently, Foreign Language is only offered to students in Grades 7 and 8.

STEM:

Leicester Middle School has partnered with WPI (Worcester Polytechnic Institute) and PLTW (Project Lead the Way) in developing our STEM curriculum. Students in Grade 5 and 6 take a 90 day (Semester) course in Design and Modeling during the 2019-2020 school year. As we progress to the 2020-2021 school year, we will be looking to adjust our courses we offer so that a different course is offered at each grade level. Students discover the design process and develop an understanding of the influence of creativity and innovation in their lives. They are then challenged and empowered to use and apply what they've learned throughout the unit to design a therapeutic toy for a child who has cerebral palsy. Students in Grade 7 take a 90 Day (Semester) course in Automation and Robotics. Here they trace the history, development, and influence of automation and robotics as they learn about mechanical systems, energy transfer, machine automation, and computer control systems. Students use the VEX Robotics® platform to design, build, and program real-world objects such as traffic lights, toll booths, and robotic arms. Grade 8 students will take a 90 Day (Semester) course in Flight and Space. During this unit, students delve into the history of flight and space, discover the science behind aeronautics, and explore traveling and living in space. Students are then challenged to use their knowledge to design, build, and test an airfoil. Beginning in the 2019-2020 school year, students in the 7th and 8th grade, will have the opportunity to replace their Automation and Robotics and Flight and Space course with Computer Science for Innovators and Makers. Students who successfully complete this course, will also have the opportunity in the 8th grade to take a course called App Creators.

RTI MATH and READING:

Leicester Middle School administers a school wide screener four times per year. Once at the beginning of the year and again during each 45 day Quarter. The STAR Assessment is designed to screen students in their skills in Mathematics and in Reading. Identified students are scheduled into an RTI Math or RTI Reading period that coincides with one of their electives. The structure of the RTI program is to provide students with an appropriate intervention and as progress is made, they can transition out of the program. Currently we have a

full time Reading Teacher who works with Wilson based products and a half time Math Interventionist who also works as an inclusion Math Teacher.

PLANNING and COLLABORATION GRADES 5-8:

The school utilizes a common planning time where members of each department meet 2-3 times a week for 25 minutes. This time is designed to plan lessons, discuss and review student work and data and to observe teaching strategies in other classrooms. In addition to a common planning period, each teacher also receives a 50 minute prep period. In each department, prep periods are aligned so that teachers can continue to plan lessons with each other. Grade-level teams meet after school 2-3 times per month for an hour. Along with our guidance counselor, school administration and other service providers, grade level teams discuss needs of students and develop action plans for those students.

Proposed:

In order to prepare students for success in adulthood in the 21st Century, we must continue to engage all learning styles in a blended learning environment, where students have opportunities to learn in multiple styles but also are guided by teachers in completing self-directed inquiry and investigation through research and engaging hands-on activities. Teachers are being asked to expand their roles and become a “guide on the side”, strategizing to encourage students to be self-motivated investigators who can problem-solve in the 21st Century in jobs that likely have not yet even been created. This expanded responsibility of educators to both deliver instructional content and also guide the student learner as an investigator is key to creating successful lifelong learners and professionals. It is an approach which requires an energized and collaborative staff that understands the evolving social and educational demands of the 21st Century. The Leicester Middle School staff is already on their way to doing such things. This group of highly motivated educators is actively involved in identifying the strengths of the current middle school educational delivery and how these strengths can be reinforced through the creation of an engaging educational environment. Appropriate space will be needed for students so that staff can facilitate the necessary teaching, learning, research and investigation needed for project based learning. Educators at Leicester Middle School have identified the current challenges and limitations associated with their typically classroom. Teaching through the workshop model and infusing project based learning is not easy and impose immediate restrictions.

Each academic cluster in the Middle School wing requires one or more easily accessible flexible-learning spaces. We define flexible-learning spaces as: spaces that are clearly defined; viewable and monitorable, from all of the classrooms in the cluster. They should not be an isolated space which is remote from the classrooms. These spaces will meet the needs of staff and students by extending the classroom environment and supporting and promoting social interactions, academic investigation, and students' individual needs. Students will access these spaces either in small groups, or as a quiet place they can work one-on-one with a teacher or paraprofessional. These spaces will be seen as extensions of the classroom. The goal is to develop students who are self-motivated learner-explorers. Each flexible-learning space should contain furniture that is flexible and can be moved and combined to redefine the space based on the needs of its occupants, and have plenty of wall and whiteboard space.

The Middle School wing should contain a makerspace that is adjacent and connected to the STEM and Library/Media Center. We define makerspace as a space that students can access throughout the school day, as well as before and after-school, where there are resources to give kids the opportunity to build, create, and extend their learning. This space will be utilized throughout the day as an extension

of the grade level classrooms by students as a place to build, create and explore with tools and materials that are not typically found in a traditional classroom. This workshop will offer students a “messy space” to work on projects, discover through hands on labs, and to build and create. We envision this space as a “fish bowl” with plenty of viewing angles into the hallway, STEM and science rooms. This space should fit between 15 to 18 students at a time, with space to design, build, store projects.

In conjunction with Future Ready Schools, Leicester has developed the following vision of technology, as it relates to teaching methodology, curriculum, data use, and budgeting:

- **Vision of Digital Learning:** Learning must extend beyond the walls of our schools for students to compete with their peers. We must provide students with anytime, anywhere access to the curriculum and the necessary tools to personalize their education.
- **Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment:** Curriculum, instruction, and assessment will leverage technology in order to provide the most engaging, effective, and personalized learning environment.
- **Use of Time:** Through the use of technology, learning will occur 24/7 both inside and outside of the classroom and at each student's individual pace to meet rigorous standards as well as to explore individual interests.
- **Technology, Networks, and Hardware:** Leicester schools Technology Department provide technology, network, and hardware to enable safe, but open access to digital resources.
- **Data and Privacy:** Leicester schools provide a digital environment that ensures privacy, security of data, as well as the protection of students' identities while encouraging staff to use data to inform instruction, curriculum, and assessment.
- **Community Partnerships:** Partnerships are leveraged to build global competencies and connect parents to their child's educational goals.
- **Professional Learning:** Leicester educators engage in professional learning that builds competencies necessary to support 21st Century learning.
- **Budget and Resources:** The budget process and policies of Leicester Public Schools are designed to ensure continual improvement of the instructional experience of our students while being fiscally responsible to the taxpayers.
- **Leadership:** Administration and staff will support 21st Century learning initiatives that utilize technology to communicate, collaborate, engage, problem-solve, and create.

The vision and implementation strategies are shared with the District Improvement Plan and are evident in the district's vision: recognized by the community as its greatest asset, the Leicester Schools engage every child in a rigorous and student-centered learning in a safe and technology-rich environment.

The use of technology in the classroom should be meaningful to the students educational goals and should enable them to achieve heights, not otherwise attainable without it. The following depicts our beliefs about learning, and how digital learning and a technology-rich learning environment can support students at the Middle School.

Beliefs About Learning	How does digital learning support our beliefs?
We believe in providing varied learning opportunities.	Students will... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collaborate by sharing documents through Google and working

Key Area	<p>together online.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectively communicate using technology and participate in educational opportunities beyond the classroom. Utilize technology to publish examples of gained knowledge.
Key Area	<p>Students will...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply techniques and strategies to solve problems. Leverage technology to engage in discussions that require analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Create products collaboratively using a variety of different strategies and programs.
Key Area	<p>Students will...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take ownership of their education and have the autonomy to take academic risks. Apply knowledge to authentic situations beyond the classroom.
Key Area	<p>Students will...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draw upon real time content and multiple perspectives. Utilize immediate and real time feedback. Share knowledge with others outside of our educational community.
Key Area	<p>Students will...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete technology-rich assessments that involve rigorous tasks and real-world situations. Edit and assess peer work.
Key Area	<p>Students will...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote academic integrity. Demonstrate the responsible use of technology Self-monitor their use of technology to improve their educational experience.

Leicester Elementary School

Core subjects include Mathematics, Science, English Language Arts and Social Studies. Non-core subjects include Health, Physical Education, Music, and Art.

Academic Classrooms K-4

Content Area	Grade Level	Time on Learning (Weekly)	Teaching Methodology
English Language Arts	K-4	600 minutes	Whole class and small

			group instruction. Workshop model, classroom library, Chromebooks for peer editing and individual instruction
Mathematics	K-4	375 Minutes	Whole class and small group instruction. Workshop model, Chromebooks for online instruction
Science	K-4	150 Minutes	Whole class and collaborative groups, stations, Chromebooks
Social Studies	K-4	150 Minutes	Whole class and collaborative groups, Chromebooks for research
Art	K-4	40 Minutes	Whole group and collaborative group
Music	K-4	40 Minutes	Whole group and collaborative group
Health	K-4	40 Minutes	Whole group and collaborative group
Physical Education	K-4	40 Minutes	Whole group, collaborative group
RTI Math and Reading	K-4	300 Minutes	Small group and individual learning, Chromebooks for instruction

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS:

Literacy standards for writing, grammar, and vocabulary are directly aligned to the MA Curriculum Frameworks for ELA and Literacy. Teachers plan instruction around common themes, providing students with a strong connection between what they are reading and writing about in class. Every teacher in K-4 uses a common resource, Wonders, aligned to the new state standards to develop lessons and assessments that support the theme or unit. The writing and language standards drive the planning of instruction, assignments and assessments. STAR assessments are given to students three times a year as a progress monitoring tool and screener in grades 3 and 4. DIBELS and Fountas & Pinnel screeners are administered in grades K-2.

MATHEMATICS:

The elementary math curriculum is aligned to the 2011 MA Curriculum Framework. Teachers follow a common pacing and alignment guide to plan their year-long learning goals for students. Each classroom is equipped with materials and resources from a common math program: enVisions. Teachers and students have access to textbooks, as well as online digital resources and assessments. STAR assessments are given to students three times a year as a progress monitoring tool and screener in grades 3 and 4. DIBELS screeners are administered in grades K-2.

SCIENCE:

The science curriculum is aligned to the new science standards. Teachers are implementing this curriculum through the use of Foss Kits in grades K-4. Hands-on activities, small group collaborative projects, and lab experiments drive the daily curriculum.

SOCIAL STUDIES:

The curriculum is based on the current History and Social Science standards outlined in the MA Curriculum Frameworks. Primary sources, periodicals, virtual tours, field trips, web-based research, and teacher-created lessons all contribute to the design and implementation of the social studies curriculum.

RTI MATH and READING:

Both Primary and Memorial School administer a school wide screener three times per year. At the beginning of the year, middle and end-of-year after each 60 day trimester. The assessments are designed to screen students in their skills in Mathematics and in Reading. Identified students are scheduled into RTI Math or RTI Reading intervention groups. The structure of the RTI program is to provide students with an appropriate intervention and as progress is made, they transition out of the program. Currently each building has a part-time Intervention Teacher and two full time intervention tutors.

PLANNING and COLLABORATION:

The current schedule does not allow for a common planning time where members of each grade level can meet. Some contractual after school time is used for the purpose of developing plan lessons, discuss and review student work and data analysis. Weekly/Bi-weekly the school psychologist, BCBA, Team Chair, school administration and other service providers meet to discuss struggling students brought to the Child Study Team's attention by classroom teachers and develop action plans for those students.

Daily each teacher receives a 40 minute prep period. The current schedule allows for half of each grade level to have the same Prep period to allow some opportunity for teachers to plan lessons with each other. Grade-level teams meet after school 2-3 times per month for an hour.

Proposed:

In order to prepare students for success in adulthood in the 21st Century, we must continue to engage all learning styles in a blended learning environment, where students have opportunities to learn in multiple styles but also are guided by teachers in completing self-directed inquiry and investigation through research and engaging hands-on activities. Teachers are being asked to expand their roles and become a “guide on the side”, strategizing to encourage students to be self-motivated investigators who can problem-solve in the 21st Century in jobs that likely have not yet even been created. This expanded responsibility of educators to both deliver

instructional content and also guide the student learner as an investigator is key to creating successful lifelong learners and professionals. It is an approach which requires an energized and collaborative staff that understands the evolving social and educational demands of the 21st Century. Appropriate space will be needed for students so that staff can facilitate the necessary teaching, learning, research and investigation needed for today's learning.

Each grade level cluster in the Elementary School wing requires one or more easily accessible flexible-learning spaces. We define flexible-learning spaces as: spaces that are clearly defined; viewable and monitorable, from all of the classrooms in the cluster. They should not be an isolated space which is remote from the classrooms. These spaces will meet the needs of staff and students by extending the classroom environment and supporting and promoting social interactions, academic investigation, and students' individual needs. Students will access these spaces either in small groups, or as a quiet place they can work one-on-one with a teacher or paraprofessional. These spaces will be seen as extensions of the classroom. The goal is to develop students who are self-motivated learner-explorers. Each flexible-learning space should contain furniture that is flexible and can be moved and combined to redefine the space based on the needs of its occupants, and have plenty of wall and whiteboard space.

The Elementary wing should contain a makerspace that is adjacent and connected to the STEM and Science rooms. We define makerspace as a space that students can access throughout the school day, as well as before and after-school, where there are resources to give kids the opportunity to build, create, and extend their learning. This space will be utilized throughout the day as an extension of the grade level classrooms by students as a place to build, create and explore with tools and materials that are not typically found in a traditional classroom. This workshop will offer students a "messy space" to work on projects, discover through hands on labs, and to build and create. We envision this space as a "fish bowl" with plenty of viewing angles into the hallway, STEM and science rooms. This space should fit between 15 to 18 students at a time, with space to design, build, store projects.

Throughout the school, there should be an abundance of student project space. We define student project space as: areas used to display and share student work. These spaces should provide access to different types of student work and mediums such as paintings, models, artwork, and digital and multimedia creations. These spaces can take different shapes, such as display cases in corridors and public areas, digital signage, or shelving units. In all cases, these spaces should be viewable to students, teachers and the public as they go about their daily activities in the school. We would like the entryway of the building to be a combination of student project space and local artists work, that tells the story of Leicester.

In conjunction with Future Ready Schools, Leicester has developed the following vision of technology, as it relates to teaching methodology, curriculum, data use, and budgeting:

- **Vision of Digital Learning:** Learning must extend beyond the walls of our schools for students to compete with their peers. We must provide students with anytime, anywhere access to the curriculum and the necessary tools to personalize their education.
- **Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment:** Curriculum, instruction, and assessment will leverage technology in order to provide the most engaging, effective, and personalized learning environment.
- **Use of Time:** Through the use of technology, learning will occur 24/7 both inside and outside of the classroom and at each student's individual pace to meet rigorous standards as well as to explore

individual interests.

- **Technology, Networks, and Hardware:** Leicester schools Technology Department provide technology, network, and hardware to enable safe, but open access to digital resources.
- **Data and Privacy:** Leicester schools provide a digital environment that ensures privacy, security of data, as well as the protection of students' identities while encouraging staff to use data to inform instruction, curriculum, and assessment.
- **Community Partnerships:** Partnerships are leveraged to build global competencies and connect parents to their child's educational goals.
- **Professional Learning:** Leicester educators engage in professional learning that builds competencies necessary to support 21st Century learning.
- **Budget and Resources:** The budget process and policies of Leicester Public Schools are designed to ensure continual improvement of the instructional experience of our students while being fiscally responsible to the taxpayers.
- **Leadership:** Administration and staff will support 21st Century learning initiatives that utilize technology to communicate, collaborate, engage, problem-solve, and create.

The vision and implementation strategies are shared with the District Improvement Plan and are evident in the district's vision: recognized by the community as its greatest asset, the Leicester Schools engage every child in a rigorous and student-centered learning in a safe and technology-rich environment.

The use of technology in the classroom should be meaningful to the students educational goals and should enable them to achieve heights, not otherwise attainable without it. The following depicts our beliefs about learning, and how digital learning and a technology-rich learning environment can support students at the Middle School.

Beliefs About Learning	How does digital learning support our beliefs?
<p>We believe in providing varied learning opportunities.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Key Area</p>	<p>Students will...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collaborate by sharing documents through Google and working together online. ● Effectively communicate using technology and participate in educational opportunities beyond the classroom. ● Utilize technology to publish examples of gained knowledge.
<p>We believe in teaching higher-order thinking skills.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Key Area</p>	<p>Students will...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Apply techniques and strategies to solve problems. ● Leverage technology to engage in discussions that require analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. ● Create products collaboratively using a variety of different strategies and programs.
<p>We believe in challenging all students with a rigorous curriculum.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Key Area</p>	<p>Students will...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Take ownership of their education and have the autonomy to take academic risks. ● Apply knowledge to authentic situations beyond the classroom.

<p>We believe in self-assessment and reflection.</p>	<p>Students will...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draw upon real time content and multiple perspectives. ● Utilize immediate and real time feedback. ● Share knowledge with others outside of our educational community.
<p>We believe in assessing learning in a meaningful way.</p>	<p>Students will..</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complete technology-rich assessments that involve rigorous tasks and real-world situations. ● Edit and assess peer work.
<p>We believe in promoting, celebrating and expecting good character.</p>	<p>Students will...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promote academic integrity. ● Demonstrate the responsible use of technology ● Self-monitor their use of technology to improve their educational experience.

TEACHER PLANNING AND ROOM ASSIGNMENT

Leicester Middle School

Current practices for teacher planning and collaboration among teachers are described in the above “Teaching Methodology and Structure” section, and include a highly collaborative approach across disciplines, grade levels, and specialties. Additionally, there is a high level of collaboration which integrates critical student support services. There is currently one full-time Guidance Counselor, one full time School Psychologist and one Nurse at Leicester Middle School. The Guidance Office and School Psychologist are centrally located in the Main Office area with the Nurse’s Office a few doors down the hallway. Students, staff, and parents can access the Nurse anytime during the school day. The Guidance staff is available to students any time during the school day for academic or social concerns. Guidance Counselors are essential components to Instructional Leadership teams, IEP team meetings, scheduling, transitioning new students, and parent communication. Each week, the school administration, Guidance Counselor, School Psychologist, IEP Team Chair, Behavioral Specialist, Nurse and SPED Department Head, sit down in a meeting referred to as the STAT Team (Student Teacher Assistance Team). During these meetings students needs are discussed and an action plan is set into motion. Teachers have the ability to refer students to the team and each member of the team brings concerns about students. Academic, Social and Emotional goals are set for students and then shared with the appropriate staff and parents.

Proposed:

Technology has greatly assisted collaboration among teachers and staff; however, the power of face-to-face interaction has yet to be replicated by technology. Human interaction is everything, especially in the creative, innovative, and knowledge-intensive sectors, including education. Practice shows that a variety of environments with different qualities are necessary for a successful and intelligent work environment. The design of the Leicester Middle School must include strategies which address functionality in the context of the needs of the students and teachers’. For example, although teachers clearly need support space in close proximity to students, there must also be spaces which have controlled sound and/or visual separation from students. Additionally, employees in most industries are no longer tied to their desk at work, but rather have a ‘home’ in

the workplace from where they organize their activities across a variety of environments with a range of different qualities which they share with their colleagues. This approach also applies to an educational environment. The efficiency of sharing these multitasking spaces is another advantage of this approach since it can reduce redundancy of spaces within a building drastically. It will always be important to avoid creating an environment which provides ‘back of house / front of house’ separation between pupils and staff; however, teachers need to be able to control their presence and privacy in order to protect their position in the social hierarchy of the school.

In the creative industries, spatial and workplace culture is directly linked with productivity. Space planning and knowledge management are the key to successful workplace design. The strength of any creative organization is shaped as much by the day-to-day chance contact of its members as it is by formal gatherings such as scheduled appointments. In fact, innovation in the workplace is often the result of informal, ‘unplanned’ interaction. Critical information leading to educational innovation often comes from such informal encounters between teachers from varying disciplines and backgrounds. The proposed Leicester Middle School should consider the relationships between physical layout and space occupation strategy in order to optimize both informal and formal teacher interaction. One example of this would be the incorporation of teacher dining space and teacher work space into the teacher collaboration space, as this is also a great way to promote this unplanned interaction.

These varying spaces and their specific organization should be considered throughout the planning of the Leicester Middle School. Teacher planning and work spaces should be incorporated into each grade-level team in a way that allows teachers to interact, create, plan, collaborate, and complete their work. This space is critical to the successful implementation of a co-teaching and teaming model. Although these spaces should be in close proximity to the team, consideration should also be given to the level of privacy required in some of the work and planning area. Grade-level teams, including Special Education staff and support teachers, will be located in teaching neighborhoods that include meeting areas, planning rooms, and teacher offices. These neighborhood areas will provide a visible and flexible learning environment for grade-level teams, Special Education staff, and support staff, as well as provide a space for engaging parents and the greater community in the ongoing projects and activities of the team. Each floor should have a teacher work space that allows for neighborhood meetings, teacher planning, collaboration and display space for teachers to show off their student’s work.

All classrooms should be equipped with adequate windows to allow for proper natural lighting and should also provide transparency (glass) into surrounding spaces when it is functionally advantageous and has the potential to increase the opportunities for supervision of students. The educational visioning sessions included discussions on the value of transparency, but also on the need for privacy and how to balance these needs. Each neighborhood (classroom wing) should have access to one or more flexible-learning spaces. The flexible-learning space is to be an extension of each of the classrooms and strategies which help to promote this connectivity should be explored during design. Solutions should be explored and additional discussions should take place to determine the correct balance between transparency, connectivity, and classroom privacy. Neighborhoods and the related classroom and flexible-learning space should include ample storage space and movable furniture. Classrooms should include functional amenities such as ample electrical outlets, and all available walls should include expanded floor to-ceiling whiteboard space, as students and teachers are encouraged to write, collaborate, and explore beyond the boundaries of a 4’x8’ single whiteboard. Common planning time will be built into the schedule for all teams, and all teachers. Neighborhood space will allow for the creation and delivery of student presentations, along with visual and physical access to neighborhood classrooms. As mentioned previously, the grade 5/6 neighborhoods should have some separation from the 7/8 neighborhoods, but a careful balance of separation and adjacency is necessary as they should still be convenient

to all grade levels for access to advanced placement and mentoring opportunities. The inclusion of teacher collaboration, work, and conference space in each of these neighborhoods should exist for both convenience (reducing the distance staff must travel and therefore increasing efficiency and ease of use) and also as an additional strategy for visual observation of students at all times.

Science Labs will be located in each grade-level neighborhood. This area will be equipped with appropriate furniture (rolling demonstration tables, workstations, ability to have students work both independently and in cooperative groups) and science materials. It will also be able to promote interdisciplinary work, including STEM initiatives. The Science Labs should be flexible and should avoid built-in amenities that limit the flexibility of space. Middle school science applications, labs, and experiments are more limited than those in high school, and the space should reflect such. Access to sinks, slightly larger overall size, and other minor programmatic needs should be the only characteristics which make this space any different from a typical flexible and interchangeable classroom.

Support Staff such as Guidance Counselors, Nurses, Speech Therapists, and Occupational Therapists should have dedicated spaces with the necessary privacy, but should also be strategically located throughout the school, when practical, such that these services can become a more integral part of the academic neighborhoods. The Nurse will continue to have an integral involvement in wellness and physical education planning and therefore should be located in an area which fosters such. Administration will continue to play a key role in monitoring the entry experience and control for students and parents, suggesting that these offices will be located adjacent to primary building entry points. Subsequent to the development of the proposed building arrangement, some consideration may be given to locating the two primary administrators (Principal and Vice Principal) in distinctly different areas of the building to provide a better distribution of administrative resources. Advantages and disadvantages of this approach were discussed during the educational visioning process and it was determined that further considerations are required through the development of a preliminary schematic building plan.

One of the key attributes of the academic neighborhoods is the teacher's ability to know each student within the neighborhood personally, and vice versa. This provides comfort and confidence to the student learner, and also allows the teacher to develop a detailed understanding of each student's needs, learning styles, and personality. For this reason, the goal within each grade-level neighborhood would be to have each teacher complete all instruction within the same academic neighborhood on a daily basis. There may be some interchangeability of the individual classrooms within the neighborhood, but the staff within the neighborhood would remain the same.

The Main Administrative Office will be located at the building entrance as a primary receiving, control, and security point, but will only include the administrative offices necessary to support this function. Some distribution of administration space may be desired to achieve the above defined goal. This distribution of resources is believed to have some potential benefits in controlling security and discipline.

Leicester Elementary School

Current practices for teacher planning and collaboration among teachers are described in the above "Teaching Methodology and Structure" section, and include a highly collaborative approach across disciplines, grade levels, and specialties. Additionally, there is a high level of collaboration which integrates critical student support services. There is currently one full-time BCBA, one full time School Psychologist and one Nurse at

each elementary building. Each week, the school administration, BCBA, School Psychologist, IEP Team Chair, and Nurse sit down in a meeting referred to as the Child Study Team. During this meeting student needs are discussed and an action plan is set into motion. Teachers have the ability to refer students to the team and each member of the team brings concerns about students. Academic, Social and Emotional goals are set for students and then shared with the appropriate staff and parents.

Proposed:

Teacher collaboration and work spaces should be incorporated into each grade-level team in a way that allows teachers to interact, create, plan, collaborate, and complete their work. This space is critical to the successful implementation of a co-teaching and teaming model. Although these spaces should be in close proximity to the team, consideration should also be given to the level of privacy required in some of the work and planning area.

Grade-level teams, including Special Education staff and support teachers, will be located in the grade level cluster. The flexible learning space will allow teams to have entire cluster meetings which include the associated teachers and staff. They can provide space for teachers to exhibit their collaborative efforts, displaying student work and projects as an example of their interdisciplinary planning. Ideally, the relationship between the teacher collaboration areas and the flexible learning space would allow for teachers to move between these two areas efficiently; observing student movement and activity within the cluster and providing additional oversight such that students can be offered more freedom to utilize their cluster as a safe haven before and after school.

All classrooms should be equipped with adequate windows to allow for proper natural lighting and should also provide transparency (glass) into surrounding spaces when it is functionally advantageous and has the potential to increase the opportunities for supervision of students. Clusters and the related classroom and support spaces should include ample storage space, movable furniture, some movable walls for co-teaching, team teaching, and flexible grouping as defined above. Classrooms should include functional amenities such as ample electrical outlets, and all available walls should include expanded floor to-ceiling whiteboard space, as students and teachers are encouraged to write, collaborate, and explore beyond the boundaries of a 4'x8' single whiteboard. Common planning time will be built into the schedule for all teams, and all teachers. Cluster space will allow for the creation and delivery of student presentations, along with visual and physical access to cluster classrooms. The inclusion of teacher collaboration, work, and conference space in each of these clusters should exist for both convenience (reducing the distance staff must travel and therefore increasing efficiency and ease of use) and also as an additional strategy for visual observation of students at all times.

Science Lab space will be located in each classroom. This area will be equipped with appropriate furniture (rolling demonstration tables, workstations, ability to have students work both independently and in cooperative groups) and science materials. It will also be able to promote interdisciplinary work, including STEM initiatives. The Science Labs should be flexible and should avoid built-in amenities that limit the flexibility of space. Access to sinks, slightly larger overall size, and other minor programmatic needs should be the only characteristics which make this space any different from a typical flexible and interchangeable classroom.

Support Staff such as BCBA, Speech Therapists, and Occupational Therapists should have dedicated spaces with the necessary privacy, but should also be strategically located throughout the school, when practical, such that these services can become a more integral part of the academic clusters.

A nursing suite would be required to address the varying health needs of students. Medical amenities mirroring those of a hospital are needed. As well as private spaces for diapering and daily medical procedures, i.e. flushing of g-tubes.

Two separate sensory rooms and de-escalation spaces would be needed to support Students with Autism separately from Students who require social/emotional support. These safe and supportive spaces will include interventions in the areas that address sensory needs, coping strategies, and academic support. Sensory supports will be available in a specified area of the room that contains equipment and activities to benefit sensory processing difficulties. Coping strategies will be addressed through supplies, prompts, and locations for the practice and use of self-regulation. Academic support can be provided at desk areas to allow students a safe place to work on difficult subject content.

The Main Administrative Office will be located at the building entrance as a primary receiving, control, and security point, but will only include the administrative offices necessary to support this function. Some distribution of administration space may be desired as the distribution of resources is believed to have some potential benefits in controlling security and discipline.

PRE-KINDERGARTEN

Leicester Elementary School

We currently have three PreK classrooms. In the future we would like to support a configuration that includes a preschool program for students with more intensive need as well as two to three integrated classrooms. All programming will include some time with neurotypical peers to provide appropriate role models. Due to budget constraints and space allocations, it was necessary to temporarily relocate the PreK classrooms to the high school. It is our intention that the program be part of the new elementary school and share the benefits of the space and support mindful transitions as our youngest learners move to kindergarten. This will also ensure the student's access to all necessary itinerant services from specialists trained to work with the youngest population.

The academic programming for PreKindergarten supports the develop of centers/Workshop Model for hands-on/multidisciplinary learning. The classrooms should provide instructional spaces, i.e. tables, with enough room for play kitchens, reading areas, plenty of small group activities and both formal and informal play.

Each room would require its own restroom as well as a changing area, with an accessible sink in the classroom. The majority of the classrooms should be carpeted with areas that have tile or linoleum for snack time or projects involving glue, paint, etc.

KINDERGARTEN

Leicester Elementary School

Leicester Public Schools offers non-tuition based, full-time Kindergarten. Ideally, each classroom or group of classrooms would have direct access to restrooms, adjacent to the learning space. The majority of the classrooms should be carpeted with areas that have tile or linoleum for snack time or projects involving glue, paint, etc.

The academic programming for Kindergarten requires a lot of centers/Workshop Model. The classrooms should provide instructional spaces, i.e. tables, with enough room for play kitchens, reading areas and plenty of small-group, hands-on activities.

LUNCH PROGRAM AND STUDENT DINING

Shared Facilities

The kitchen and its necessary storage and preparation facilities should be large enough to serve both schools simultaneously. The separate dining rooms for students should have separate serving lines that offer diverse menu choices for the different age groups.

Leicester Middle School

As a student evolves through middle school, the development of social skills is an integral part of a student's education. Lunchtime offers students the opportunity to socialize and decompress with classmates. Unfortunately, when the current Leicester Middle School cafeteria was designed some sixty years ago, these considerations were not a factor and the resulting space is a long, narrow room with little acoustical treatment, no significant natural light, and no educational or social purpose. It is somewhat isolated from remaining program areas, limiting its use and flexibility as anything other than a dining space.

The current kitchen facilities are also very inadequate with many constraints as follows:

- The poor ventilation.
- The current physical space hinders the flow of students purchasing lunch.
- Current appliances are original to the building and are not working to full capacity. For example only half the heat elements on the kettle are operational and cannot be repaired due to the age of the appliance.
- Inadequate storage and freezer space.
- The compressor units for the refrigerator are located within the kitchen are not efficient.
- Lack of electrical outlets which are not placed appropriately and which requires use of extension cords.

Leicester Middle School offers four lunch servings each day, one for each grade. This is not ideal, as in order to accommodate appropriate lunch times, students are scheduled into a non traditional periods thus reducing the class time for other periods. The current setup of the cafeteria can only accommodate one grade at a time. The proposed lunch serving would reduce the number of servings from four down to two. This would help balance out our current schedule and possibly allow time for an advisory period. Students in Grade 5 and Grade 6 would eat together and students in Grade 7 and Grade 8 would eat together. This would also allow for the dining space to be used for multiple functions throughout the day. Students also have the opportunity to eat outside, weather permitting, however our capacity for outdoor dining is only about 40 students per lunch.

Leicester Elementary School

The Leicester Elementary School offers four lunch servings each day. Grades K-2 each have a separate lunch period while grades 3 and 4 have a shared lunch period. It would be ideal to have a larger space and some outdoor seating space for outdoor dining.

Proposed:

Leicester Middle and Elementary propose a shared cafetorium that is served by a shared kitchen. The proposed student dining area should be located and designed in a manner which provides easy access to both the Middle and Elementary wings. The cafetorium should include student work presentation spaces, indoor/outdoor connections, and a full size stage for musical and theatrical presentation during non-lunch hours. This space should be in close enough proximity to remaining building program areas to promote their use throughout the day. Outdoor connections to an elementary playground, and a Middle School play space are necessary. Consideration should be given to creating these areas as flexible space with multi-use potential; locating them close enough to the classroom clusters to promote their high utilization while taking precautions to ensure that their functions do not compromise the use of surrounding areas.

We envision a single room that is subdividable into two dining rooms, one for PreK-4 and one for 5-8. Each capable of serving and seating two grades at a time. During the dining hours, this room will be divided with an acoustic wall. The layout should promote ease of meal distribution from the kitchen, with separate serving lines for the elementary and middle dining rooms and should be designed to avoid bottlenecking students and ensuring that they are able to purchase their meals and be seated within a reasonable and efficient timeframe.

We require outdoor seating for approximately 25% of each of the dining rooms at a time. We would expect that the sight lines between the on staff supervision of the cafetorium and the outside to allow supervision of both locations simultaneously.

For additional details on the uses and needs of the Cafetorium, please see the section on Music and Performing Arts.

TECHNOLOGY INSTRUCTION, PROGRAMMING, INFRASTRUCTURE

In 2015 Leicester took the Future Ready Schools pledge, and are committed to providing a personalized, digital learning environment so all students can achieve their full potential. To that end, we have developed the following vision of technology and digital learning: Learning must extend beyond the walls of our schools for students to compete with their peers. We must provide students with anytime, anywhere access to the curriculum and the necessary tools to personalize their education.

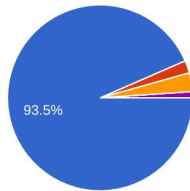
- Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment: Curriculum, instruction, and assessment will leverage technology in order to provide the most engaging, effective, and personalized learning environment.
- Use of Time: Through the use of technology, learning will occur 24/7 both inside and outside of the classroom and at each student's individual pace to meet rigorous standards as well as to explore individual interests.
- Technology, Networks, and Hardware: Leicester schools provide technology, network, and hardware to enable safe, but open access to digital resources throughout the building.

- **Data and Privacy:** Leicester schools provide a digital environment that ensures privacy, security of data, as well as the protection of students' identities while encouraging staff to use data to inform instruction, curriculum, and assessment.
- **Community Partnerships:** Partnerships are leveraged to build global competencies and connect parents to their child's educational goals.
- **Professional Learning:** Leicester educators engage in professional learning that builds competencies necessary to support 21st Century learning.
- **Budget and Resources:** The budget process and policies of Leicester Public Schools are designed to ensure continual improvement of the instructional experience of our students while being fiscally responsible to the taxpayers.
- **Leadership:** Administration and staff will support 21st Century learning initiatives that utilize technology to communicate, collaborate, engage, problem-solve, and create.

The vision and implementation strategies are shared with the current District Improvement Plan and are evident in the district's vision: recognized by the community as its greatest asset, the Leicester Schools engage every child in a rigorous and student-centered learning in a safe and technology-rich environment. When employed as part of a comprehensive educational strategy, the effective use of technology provides tools, resources, data, and supportive systems that increase teaching opportunities and promote efficiency.

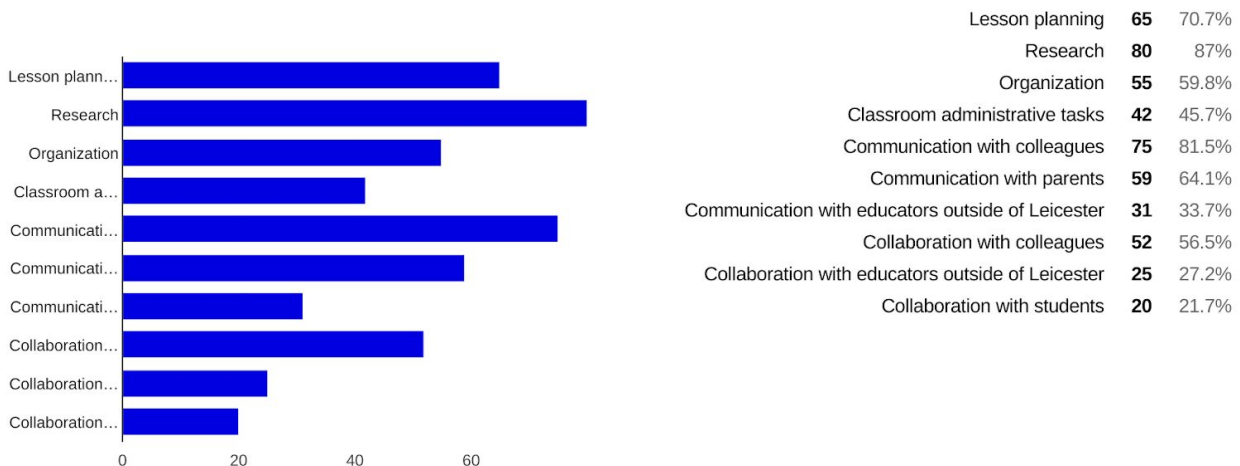
In an effort to continually improve technology adoption and instruction we frequently poll staff. According to a 2015 survey, 95% of teachers frequently use technology outside of the classroom to research, lesson plan, organize, perform administrative tasks, communicate, and collaborate. While the majority of time teachers are lesson planning and researching for their classes, we have seen an increase of collaboration using Google Docs and networking with other teachers using social media such as Twitter and Facebook.

Outside of the classroom, how frequently do you use technology



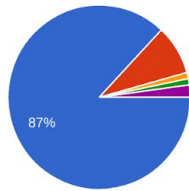
Every day	86	93.5%
Every other day	2	2.2%
Once a week	3	3.3%
Once a month	0	0%
Infrequently	1	1.1%

When using technology outside of the classroom, what type of educational activities do you engage in?



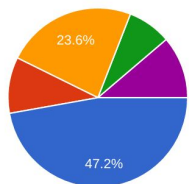
A. Teaching and Learning - According to a 2015 survey, just under 50% of teachers use technology daily to deliver instruction across the district as opposed to a projected 87% of students that use it in their everyday lives.

Outside of the classroom, how frequently do you suppose the average student in your classroom uses technology?



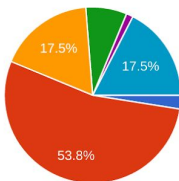
Every day	80	87%
Every other day	8	8.7%
Once a week	1	1.1%
Once a month	1	1.1%
Infrequently	2	2.2%

In the classroom, how frequently do you use technology to deliver instruction?



Every day	42	47.2%
Every other day	9	10.1%
Once a week	21	23.6%
Once a month	7	7.9%
Infrequently	10	11.2%

Which of the following most frequently keeps you from using technology in the classroom?



Fear	2	2.5%
Accessibility to devices	43	53.8%
Quality of the devices	14	17.5%
Lack of quality digital content	6	7.5%
Curriculum does not support its use	1	1.3%
Time	14	17.5%

The four fundamental areas a new building needs to address are:

- Adequacy of Devices; Quality and Availability
 - 1:1 digital learning environment staff and students (where requested)
 - Additional access to PC's, Chromebooks, and other technologies that serve specific purposes, i.e. STEM labs, Library/Media Center, and non-1:1 environments.
- 21st century classrooms
 - Both wired and wireless high-speed access to the internet
 - Digital displays, and integrated sound systems
 - Space to collaborate, build and share with technology
 -
- Robust Network Infrastructure
 - Modern networking protocols
 - Fiber linking the building to the rest of the network
- Adequate and Responsive Support Systems
 - Systems that allow for addition to and upgrades over time
 - Appropriate facilities to maintain the network and building equipment

Environments that enable anytime, anywhere learning based on competency and mastery with empowered, caring adults who are guiding the way for each student to succeed. High quality, high speed technology and infrastructure systems within a school district are essential to the advancing of digital learning. In these

environments, the use of technology is seamless, and students have ubiquitous access to broadband on high quality devices both at school and while at home.

Leicester Middle School

The existing Leicester Middle School building offers a number of networking and access challenges. Although the school community has made great strides in working to integrate new technologies with the classrooms, technology integration remains restricted by the design and limitations of the building. The most pressing challenges impeding progress in technology integration are:

- Dated networking equipment and wiring protocols.
- Lack of reliable electrical infrastructure and outlets.
- Physical limitations of hanging mounted projectors and whiteboards, although most classrooms have wall mounted projectors, the physical restrictions of the classroom environment, makes them difficult to use and maintain.
- The wiring infrastructure at the current Leicester Middle School is antiquated and does not meet the system-wide vision.
- Voice and security systems are failing.
- FM systems in the classroom are nonexistent.
- No space for maintenance of 1:1 devices, or networking equipment.
- Costly leased fiber ties Leicester Elementary School's network to the High School.

Proposed

The Middle School needs two separate STEM spaces. The first room should be a classroom instructional space where instruction can be delivered to whole classes and small groups. The second classroom should be in direct access to the first, but should have enough space for groups of students to plan, create, build and test their creations. With the addition of a competitive robotics team, a space within the second room would be needed to build such creations.

All classrooms, educational spaces, and breakout spaces should have access to:

- A robust wireless network that is easily maintained and can be built-upon and rebuilt over time.
- A modern wired network that ties each classroom neighborhood and floor together with fiber.
- A modern voice network.
- A modern security network that allows for quick access and retrieval of images and video on or off site.
- An FM system that enables those hard of hearing to interact with all classroom activities.
- Interactive projection equipment.
- A robust sound system.

Currently, students in grades 5-8 have Chromebooks that they take home with them each evening. Leicester began the process of a digital curriculum revision back in 2016 when it took the Future Ready Pledge. School committee policy specifically describes how students must have a device with them each day to access our expanding digital curriculum. "In order to access the districts expanding digital curriculum, all students in grades 5-12 need access to a connected device during the school day. In acknowledgment of the high price of technology, the district will provide a device to students in grades 5-12 so long as an annual technology fee is paid to cover accidental breaks and damage that occurs. If a family chooses not to participate in this program, it is expected that they will provide their own device for daily use at school, while supporting and maintaining it independently." The district offers devices to families that cannot afford to purchase them or repair them on

their own, as well as information on free/low cost internet service based on the family's income. Through the educational visioning process, we would like to explore the possibility of expanding this program to the elementary grades. Additional research must be done to determine the best device for these students.

Leicester Elementary School

In 2013, Leicester Elementary School had a network upgrade that brought modern day networking equipment and wiring protocols to the classrooms. Currently, technology use in the classroom is limited to aging presentation equipment, and 2:1 Chromebooks in grades 1 through 4. The most pressing challenges impeding progress in technology integration are:

- Lack of reliable electrical infrastructure and outlets.
- Voice and security systems are failing.
- FM systems in the classroom are nonexistent.
- No space for maintenance of 1:1 devices, or networking equipment.
- Costly leased fiber ties Leicester Elementary School's network to the High School.

Proposed

A 21st century elementary classroom will provide the space and access to technology that students and teachers crave. Devices, access to WIFI, space to collaborate and create are all necessary.

In addition to the technology in the classroom, a separate space for STEM instruction, is needed. These spaces should encourage and support students to engage in hands-on activities, projects, and problems; empower them to solve real-world challenges; and inspire them to reimagine how they see themselves. The STEM classroom should provide space for instruction to be delivered to whole classes and small groups and have enough space for groups of students to plan, create, build and test their creations.

All classrooms and educational spaces should have access to:

- A robust wireless network that is easily maintained and can be built-upon, and rebuilt over time.
- A modern wired network that ties each classroom neighborhood and floor together with fiber.
- A modern voice network.
- A modern security network that allows for quick access and retrieval of images and video on or off site.
- An FM system that enables those hard of hearing to interact with all classroom activities.
- Wireless, interactive projection equipment.
- A robust sound system.
- Ample space and capacity to store and charge student devices.

Proposed Building-wide

A new K-8 building would be the largest school in Leicester and will be the center of the Leicester Public Schools network. A dedicated space, with adjacencies to each other to serve the needs of the building and the district would include:

- An air conditioned head end room to serve as the hub of the LPS network and store additional tools and equipment.
- A workshop to maintain student and teacher devices, as well as the networking equipment.
- Office space for the technology staff.
- Storage space for technology equipment, with access to the exterior of the building via a garage door.
- A fiber connection to the High School MDF closet.

ART PROGRAMS

Leicester Middle School

Forty-five minute periods are taught by one Art teacher each day for the whole school. Leicester has a very strong and diverse arts program, however instruction takes place in one classroom space where the age, condition and physical constraints of this space limit the vision of the Art department. Currently there is no kiln in the Art room.

Visual and Performing Arts are critical components of the middle school experience. The Art department is vital in the success of our visual and performing arts programs. Each year, students at Leicester Middle School put on a drama production. Under close teacher supervision, students are directly involved in the design and construction phases of the sets, as sets are assembled prior to the performance.

Proposed:

Leicester Middle School has an established STEM curriculum called Project Lead The Way. One of the goals established at Leicester Middle School is continued growth for STEAM within Leicester Middle School, specifically including the integration of the Arts, both visual and performing. These Arts foster creativity, providing one of the primary components of the four C's. In the case of the visual arts, students must have opportunities to integrate their creativity into hands-on project-based learning and investigation that will be occurring in the makerspaces. The goal is not to turn the makerspaces into an art room, but to allow students to execute skills they are fostering in the specialized art room as part of their daily exploration and discovery in other disciplines.

The Middle School should have a primary and specialized art classroom which becomes the hub of visual art instruction, it should be in close proximity to the elementary art room to provide for collaboration and sharing of resources. In order for this specialized art classroom to serve the entire school, as well as the individual academic teams, it should meet the following criteria:

- Access to significant natural light, if practical
- Art room equipped with good natural and artificial lighting (including track lighting for spotting still-life), cleanable surfaces, plenty of table space, and flexible furniture configuration
- Easy to clean flooring
- Increased built in storage for 2D, 3D projects, and resource materials
- At least three large stainless steel industrial sinks with backsplashes, sediment traps, and faucets that swivel
- Multiple tack display boards throughout the room and around the school for displaying resource materials and student work
- State-of-the-art technology including but not limited to electrical outlets in the walls, a mounted projector, surround sound, high capacity color printer, scanner, at least two computer stations for students
- Large storage room separate from the classroom that includes an assortment of utility cabinets, flat files, racks, and tables as well as built in storage
- Space for a kiln and a ventilation system

- Space for storage of larger art furniture (i.e., multiple pottery wheels, light table, etc.)
- A dedicated kiln room with proper ventilation.
- The ability to scan and print large format documents.
- 3D printer

The Visual Arts also maintains a strong connection to media and video production, a program which is likely to have a physical existence within the library media center function but be supported by the Art educators.

The performing arts will be utilizing the stage, music, and band rooms and would benefit from a ground floor location with strong connections to the outdoors. Possible indoor/outdoor performance opportunities were discussed as part of the visioning sessions and should continue to be explored through the design process.

Leicester Elementary School

Leicester Elementary School has an established STEM curriculum called Project Lead The Way. One of the goals established at Leicester Elementary School is continued growth for STEAM within Leicester Middle School, specifically including the integration of the Arts, both visual and performing. These Arts foster creativity, providing one of the primary components of the four C's. Each classroom at the Leicester Elementary School has a 40 minute art class. Leicester has a very strong and diverse arts program, however instruction takes place in one classroom space where the age, condition and physical constraints of this space limit the vision of the Art department. Currently there is no kiln in the Art room.

Proposed:

The proposed building should have dedicated art classroom space that allows for whole group instruction, independent student work areas and has furniture that is flexible and allows for student interaction and collaboration. The space should have shelving for a display board and sculptures and other student projects. There should also be a sink with a drain to include clay and/or plaster traps to prevent clogging. As well as windows and direct access to the outdoors as a means of supplementing the art curriculum.

MUSIC AND PERFORMING ARTS PROGRAMS

Shared Facilities

Leicester has a rich history of supporting the arts. Currently we offer band and chorus in grades 4- 8 and performing arts in grades 6-8. An auditorium that can seat the total student and faculty population with state-of-the-art sound and lighting is needed. We envision this flexible space to be utilized for performances, assemblies, and classes. This space will also serve as a resource to the community.

Leicester Middle School

Fifty-minute periods are taught by our music teacher each day. Three periods per day are devoted to Band, one for 5th Graders, one for 6th graders and one for 7th and 8th graders. Two periods per day are devoted to Chorus, one for 5th and 6th graders and one for 7th and 8th graders. As of October 1st, 2018, nearly 25% of Leicester Middle School students are involved in Band or Chorus. Band and Chorus students receive instruction every day throughout the full year. Appropriate and adequate space for these programs is a necessity including space to store students instruments. Currently, there are no professional work areas and classroom or practice areas are

non-existent. When putting on performances for parents and the community, current spaces are unable to seat the number of parents and community members that attend, thus resulting in overcrowding.

Proposed:

The Music Education Program at Leicester Middle School should be a vital component of the total education a student receives. Through the study of music, all students develop knowledge and skills that prepare them to experience the power of music in human existence. Students discover music as a unique form of communication and as a means of self-expression not afforded by any other discipline. They learn of the universal role of music in the transmission of culture and the chronicling of history. The study of music gives children a broadened world vision and an appreciation of other points of view. As a performing art, music builds self-discipline and promotes self-esteem in ways that are not inherent in other curricular offerings. Because of the ordered nature of the elements of music, students learn to think with increased complexity; because of the creative potential in music, they learn to think in divergent ways.

Music benefits the overall learning process of every child. Research suggests that more areas of the brain become active when children engage in playing music. Program effectiveness is determined through collection and interpretation of data, which shows continual improvement in:

- The number of students in advanced courses
- The number of students who gain central district recognition through the Massachusetts Music Educators Association
- Participation and achievement in festivals and adjudications

The music program can foster and reinforce the four C's by providing opportunities in four broad areas:

Creativity:

- Imagine – generate musical ideas for various purposes and contexts.
- Plan and Make – select and develop musical ideas for defined purposes and contexts.
- Evaluate and Refine selected musical ideas to create a musical work that meets appropriate criteria.
- Present creative musical work that conveys intent, demonstrates craftsmanship, and exhibits originality.

Performance:

- Select varied musical works to present based on interest, knowledge, technical skill and context.
- Analyze the structure and context of varied musical works and their implications for performance.
- Interpret – develop personal interpretations that consider creators' intent.
- Rehearse, evaluate, and refine personal and ensemble performances, individually or in collaboration with others.
- Perform expressively with appropriate interpretation and technical accuracy, and in a manner appropriate to the audience and context.

Response

- Select music appropriate for a specific purpose or context.
- Analyze how the structure and context of varied musical works inform the response.
- Support interpretations of musical works that reflect creators'/performers' expressive intent.
- Support evaluations of musical works and performances based on analysis, interpretation, and established criteria.

Connections:

- Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make music.
- Relate musical ideas and works to varied contexts and daily life to deepen understanding.

The proposed building should also include a dedicated music space which provides students the opportunity to explore and master each of the discipline specific standards which will become the band room with another space dedicated as the chorus room. This dedicated space should include instrument areas, visuals, music technology space, secure storage, teacher work area, and movement space. Students can be allowed to develop in a specialized environment working to compose, play instruments, move, and critique within a lesson to deepen their understanding. Students of differing abilities and understandings can learn to use multiple instruments and supports. Students excelling in a particular area can expand and extend their learning through composition, conducting, or critique. A music classroom in addition to a choral stage with risers (auditorium stage) gives the teacher many more tools to reach students and allows such to occur with a more controlled environment. This music room should be located near the performance space (auditorium) to allow for smooth transitions from independent growth to ensembles skills development. Consideration should also be given to possible indoor/outdoor connections which may provide opportunities for outdoor performances. When students can play or sing together, they learn social and emotional skills that transfer out of the music classroom. When a classroom is designed thoughtfully, all students benefit from a greater understanding and skills development.

While the cafetorium provides an integral space to seat the student population during the dining hours, it must also serve the visual and performing arts as a presentation space. This space must have the proper acoustics and lighting to support a variety of performances such as dancing, theatric, and music performances. This space should seat approximately 500 in stadium style seating that pulls out from the wall. The stage should have a wood floor and fit musicians and percussion equipment for 75 choral music participants. The capability to record and performances and events is also necessary.

The music rooms should be configured in a way so that they have access to the stage within the Cafetorium. Ideally this space will be able to support full multimedia presentations with a screen that can come down from the ceiling and have a space that can be rearranged easily to promote other learning in this area. It would also provide an ideal environment for professional development and distance learning, as well as give students the opportunity for a professional presentation or performance.

Leicester Elementary School

Each classroom at the Leicester Elementary School has a 40 minute music class. The school does not have an auditorium or performance space. The gymnasium is used for performance space and when putting on performances for parents and the community, the spaces are unable to seat the number of parents and community members that attend, thus resulting in overcrowding.

Proposed:

The proposed building should include a dedicated music space with furniture that is flexible and allows for student interaction and collaboration. This space will be used for general music instruction, and as a practice space for the Elementary Band program. There is a need for adequate space for storage of supplies and equipment, to include instructional instruments and space for a growing band program.

A performance space with appropriate acoustics that will hold a minimum of the enrollment of the school. Ideally this space will be able to support full multimedia presentations with a screen that can come down from the ceiling and have a space that can be rearranged easily to promote other learning in this area. It would also provide an ideal environment for professional development and distance learning, as well as give students the opportunity for a professional presentation or performance.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Shared Facilities

We envision the gymnasium complex as a multifunctional space where the elementary and middle school physical education classes can coexist at the same time. A large gym footprint that separates into a smaller area with a dividing wall. The locker rooms would be attached to the larger space. When opened up, this space could be opened to house the entire K-8 population to host large community events.

Leicester Middle School

Our physical education program includes content that will allow students to experience progressive levels of achievement toward standards. Not only will students achieve competence in a variety of movement activities, but they also will understand the conceptual basis and principles that contribute to effective movement and fitness. Our goal is to ensure that students fully recognize and understand the significance of physical activity in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. They also should have developed the skills, knowledge, interest and desire to participate in meaningful activity for a lifetime. We create activity experiences that develop personal and social behaviors consistent with responsible behavior in sport and in society.

Fifty-minute periods are taught within the PE and Health program by a full time Physical Education teacher and a full time Health Educator. Students receive physical education for 45 days (quarter) each year and Health for 45 days (quarter) each year. Often times classes are combined for cross-curricular instruction. The gymnasium has boys and girls lockers adjacent to the gym, however there are deteriorating changing stations in the girls locker room and no changing stations for the boys locker rooms. Showers are no longer active and the bathroom facilities are not adequate. There are also “team rooms” where the Middle School sports teams can store equipment, however these rooms are also inadequate with proper locker space and the conditions have deteriorated. These areas of the building is circa 1960s and do not represent current standards and practices. The Health classroom lacks an appropriate and adequate educational environment and therefore attention to these areas are important.

The existing Leicester Middle School building provides insufficient space for the delivery of physical education programs. The building includes only a single gymnasium with a very small area for fitness. The space cannot be subdivided and lacks the necessary flexibility with a folding partition in an effort to provide as many spaces as possible. The gym is not adequate for an adaptive PE program or physical therapy space, therefore all special education students are fully included and an alternative space for physical therapy is used which is not best for students.

During the winter season the middle school opportunities for two basketball teams and track athletes. Middle school athletes share gymnasium space for basketball, and run and train in academic hallways for track. The LPS footprint does not include a soccer field for its two middle school teams.

Proposed:

Physical education is a component of the curriculum that is designed to educate all students, from the physically and/or mentally gifted to the physically and/or mentally challenged. A developmentally and instructionally appropriate physical education program promotes a physically active lifestyle. It accommodates a variety of individual differences, such as: cultural identity; previous movement experiences; fitness and skill levels; and intellectual, physical and social/emotional maturity. Appropriate instruction in physical education incorporates best practices derived from both research and experience for teaching in ways that facilitate success for all students. Providing a safe and inclusive learning environment allows all students to experience positive, challenging, and enjoyable physical activities while learning skills and developing an understanding of the benefits and importance of physical activity. In conjunction with these activity experiences, students develop a positive self-image and social skills that will provide personal competence in work and leisure situations.

For purposes of physical education and activity, the newly proposed 5-8 school will essentially operate as two independent wings. A 5/6 population of approximately 212 students and a 7/8 population of approximately 225 students (population based on the 10 year enrollment projection). In order to accommodate two distinct groups, a full size gymnasium which can be subdivided into multiple teaching stations will be required where the full student body can be seated. This will allow students in the Health class and students in the Physical Education class to use different parts of the gymnasium without disruption or interruption. The proposed program offerings for adaptive PE and OT/PT require that consideration be given to further subdividing one half of the gymnasium into two areas. If possible, indoor walking space should be provided on the perimeter of the gymnasium to accommodate adaptive programs that run simultaneously to non-adaptive programs.

Specific program areas and amenities include:

- A full-sized, sub-dividable gymnasium space (2 spaces)
- Electric collapsible bleachers that can sit the entire student body
- Mat hoists to allow for the delivery of yoga and stretching
- Climbing wall with a climbing rope and rings
- Extended and separate fitness area, including a weight room, that is in close proximity to the gymnasium and health classes
- Dedicated health classroom that is within a close proximity to the gymnasium and separate fitness space
- Health and physical education offices that allow for supervision of the locker rooms while maintaining student privacy
- Ample storage space for both physical education equipment and health supplies
- Private changing stalls in both locker rooms
- Team rooms for the middle school sports teams to store sports equipment that is separate from the physical education changing space
- Ability to project school wide presentations, instructional videos and student assessments
- Built in sound system
- Access to filtered water stations so students can refill water bottles
- Outdoor and indoor walking/jogging space with a fitness trail

Leicester Elementary School

Our physical education program includes content that will allow students to experience progressive levels of achievement toward standards. Not only will students achieve competence in a variety of movement activities, but they also will understand the conceptual basis and principles that contribute to effective movement and fitness. Our goal is to ensure that students fully recognize and understand the significance of physical activity in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. They also should have developed the skills, knowledge, interest and desire to participate in meaningful activity for a lifetime. We create activity experiences that develop personal and social behaviors consistent with responsible behavior in sport and in society.

At both Memorial and Primary schools students are taught within the PE and Health program by one full time Physical Education/Health Educator. Students receive one forty minute physical education class in the gymnasium and one forty minute health class each week in their classroom. The gym is not adequate for an adaptive PE program or physical therapy space, therefore all special education students are fully included and an alternative space for physical therapy is used which is not best for students.

Proposed:

Physical education is a component of the curriculum that is designed to educate all students, from the physically and/or mentally gifted to the physically and/or mentally challenged. A developmentally and instructionally appropriate physical education program promotes a physically active lifestyle. It accommodates a variety of individual differences, such as: cultural identity; previous movement experiences; fitness and skill levels; and intellectual, physical and social/emotional maturity. Appropriate instruction in physical education incorporates best practices derived from both research and experience for teaching in ways that facilitate success for all students. Providing a safe and inclusive learning environment allows all students to experience positive, challenging, and enjoyable physical activities while learning skills and developing an understanding of the benefits and importance of physical activity. In conjunction with these activity experiences, students develop a positive self-image and social skills that will provide personal competence in work and leisure situations.

For purposes of physical education and activity, the newly proposed school will essentially operate as two independent wings. A full size gymnasium which can be subdivided into multiple teaching stations will be required where the full student body can be seated. This will allow students in the Health class and students in the Physical Education class to use different parts of the gymnasium without disruption or interruption. The proposed program offerings for adaptive PE and OT/PT require that consideration be given to further subdividing one half of the gymnasium into two areas. If possible, indoor walking space should be provided on the perimeter of the gymnasium to accommodate adaptive programs that run simultaneously to non-adaptive programs.

Specific program areas and amenities include:

- A full-sized, sub-dividable gymnasium space (2 spaces)
- Electric collapsible bleachers that can sit the entire student body
- Mat hoists to allow for the delivery of yoga and stretching
- Climbing wall with a climbing rope and rings
- Dedicated health classroom that is within a close proximity to the gymnasium
- Ample storage space for both physical education equipment and health supplies
- Ability to project school wide presentations, instructional videos and student assessments

- Built in sound system
- Access to filtered water stations so students can refill water bottles

OUTDOOR LEARNING AND EXTERIOR SPACES

Leicester Middle School supports two soccer teams, two basketball teams, and both baseball and softball teams. These teams currently share practice and competition space with the high school athletic programs. Up to 40 middle school student-athletes per season are involved in co-curricular athletic programs. There is also the opportunity to offer middle school football, cross country and field hockey. These teams would also share space with high school programs. District-wide there are over 150 student-athletes involved in outdoor programs in the fall and spring seasons and there is no dedicated practice or play space for middle school, outdoor athletic programs. Also, baseball and softball programs share a single baseball and softball field with four high school programs for both contests and practice. The track and field programs have no dedicated, safe space to practice and all contests for those programs are off campus at competing schools.

In order to support the needs of the students, staff, families, and community members, outdoor fields and playgrounds need to support child development.

- Outdoor and indoor walking/jogging space with a fitness trail
- One Prek-K playground and one 3-4 playground
- A hard surface with basketball hoops for all types of ball play
- Outdoor playfields including a dedicated middle school multipurpose field
- Bathrooms that can be accessed from the outside of the building.

LIBRARY/MEDIA CENTER

Shared Facilities

We envision the Library/Media Center as shared space where students from the Middle and Elementary Schools. As Leicester Middle School seeks to become Future Ready, it is necessary to identify and cultivate leadership beyond district and building leaders. School librarians lead, teach and support their school and/or district's Future Ready Schools (FRS) goals through their professional practice, programs and spaces. Derived from the FRS framework, these principles both describe how librarians can support schools in this transition and identify specific ways in which librarians can themselves become more Future Ready. By aligning with strategic initiatives like FRS, librarians can better connect their practices, programs and spaces to educational innovation in schools. If properly prepared and supported, school librarians are well positioned to be at the leading edge of the digital transformation of learning.

Leicester Middle School

Leicester Middle School has one full time Library Media Specialist that works with students in grades 5-8. The library serves as a school wide space that allows for project based learning and a place where students are encouraged to read, explore, create, collaborate, and become empowered information seekers!

Significant adequate space is needed for the library to appropriately serve as a teaching area as well as a resource center for all students and staff. Currently, the Library/Media space:

- Does not have a designated space or tools for media production
- Does not have the technology to be digital creators such as videos and photography
- Does not have space for small group learning
- Limitations around the various configurations that are needed to support Project Based Learning
- We work closely and are supported by instruction and equipment provided by local business partners and the Town's cable broadcasting entity (LCAC).

Leicester Elementary School

The Elementary library and technology space serve as school wide spaces. Significant adequate space is needed for the library to appropriately serve as a teaching area as well as a resource center for all students and staff.

Currently, the Library/Media space:

- Does not have a designated space or tools for media production
- Does not have the technology or space to be digital creators such as videos and photography
- Does not have space for small group learning
- Limitations around the various configurations that are needed to support collaborative learning

Proposed:

We view the Library/Media Center as the hub of all media, as well as a resource which students can utilize throughout the school day to access spaces and resources unavailable in the classrooms. Leicester Middle and Elementary is driven to advance the use of multimedia, video editing, and production through the media center. A section of the media center should be dedicated to the storage of the necessary equipment, the equipment itself should be mobile, so that "scenes" could be shot and edited throughout the school.

This video production space should include the following mobile pieces of technology:

- MacBooks, laptops or appropriate mobile devices with photo and video editing capabilities.
- Digital cameras, microphones, and lighting rigs.

The Library/Media Center should include the following fixed items.:

- Adequate electrical services to charge devices
- A large green screen (wall) with ceiling mounted lighting.

Outside of video production, we believe the Library/Media Center is the heart of the school. It should be a warm inviting space where students in grades PreK-8 come to learn and explore. Students in the Middle and Elementary schools will utilize and access the Library/Media Center in different ways, Elementary students will receive instruction in this space, as well as accessing it with their classroom teacher. Middle school students may access it independently, in small or large groups throughout the day. Therefore, it is important that this space has many areas that are separated from one another by either distance, transparent walls and dividers, and furniture such as book shelves, yet still be open enough to provide the warm welcoming feeling we are looking for.

The Library/Media Center should be adjacent to the Middle School makerspace, and should have clear viewing lines into this space.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Leicester Middle School

Special Education and English Language Learners:

Content Area	Grade Level	Time on Learning (Weekly)	Number of Staff	Teaching Methodology
Inclusion Special Education Staff	5-8		3 Teachers	Co-Teaching with Math and/or ELA teachers. Loop between grades each year Small group academic support pull out services
Living and Learning (Life Skills)	5-8	1350 minutes per week	1 Teacher	Program for special education students which is individually designed for their needs.
ELL	5-8	Level 1-2 30 Minutes per Day Level 3-4 20 Minutes per Day Level 5 20 Minutes per Day	.15 Teacher	Small group instruction with one-one instruction.

Leicester Middle School believes in and models the co-teaching model. In 2017, a program was developed called the Living and Learning Program where students who require daily living skills receive individualized instruction within the program. Students work on daily living skills such as laundry, cleaning, cooking, shopping, etc. The current facility limits the ability to provide pre-vocational activities and personal hygiene activities which are essential for students with this disability. This classroom will necessitate a kitchen/laundry area for foundational skills to prepare students for the vocational program they will participate in at the next level of their education. In order to accommodate personal hygiene needs for students in our Living and Learning program, a staff bathroom was eliminated and had to be repurposed for students in the program.

Students who are integrated into the general education program have the ability to take a class in a separate room which is staffed by a behavioral specialist. This room is designed to help reduce the anxiety they feel from the social and academic pressures they experience from the demands of the general education setting. These students need a specially designed space where they can get organized and decompress away from the other students in the classroom. All students in this program need an area specially designed as a place to take a sensory break.

The Occupational Therapist, Speech Therapist, and Physical Therapist do not have dedicated space that is adequate to provide services to their students. Occupational and Physical Therapy services are related educational services that are provided for students requiring intervention in order to access the curriculum and the life of the school due to a disability. Occupational Therapists work with children to improve fine motor and sensory functioning, while Physical Therapists focus on gross motor needs of students. Occupational and Physical Therapists often work collaboratively in a co-treatment model. Although these students often require specialized space which is independent of the primary physical education space, it is the goal of the program to utilize the mainstream educational space such as a gymnasium and fitness room for all activities deemed applicable. The space that is designated does not allow for multiple students to be serviced at the same time, thus creating a scheduling problem. Students receiving Physical Therapy do not have enough room to fully utilize the program and therefore must find alternative space.

Ideally, the Special Education classrooms will be equipped with classroom technology, moveable furniture for flexible grouping, and a teacher area with securable file storage for student records.

There are 65 students on IEPs and 4 teaching staff. This translates to numerous TEAM meetings each week. The Special Education Team chair holds all meetings in her office which doubles as the schools only conference room. This forces other parent meetings, teacher meetings or any other events to be held in spaces where student confidentiality is a concern. The meeting space at Leicester Middle School is insufficient for the needs of the Special Education Department.

Currently there is one instructor for the ELL population at Leicester Middle School who spends 0.15 of her day here. Currently Leicester Middle School has 6 students receiving ELL instruction. This teacher also works with English Language Learners at the High School level and teaches English at the High School as well. English Language development instruction is taught with a pull-out model, meaning students are pulled to be with the instructor for certain periods of time per week dependent upon their fluency levels. Instruction takes place in small groups or one-to-one as needed. There is no dedicated space for ELL instruction and instruction typically takes place in a meeting room or office.

Ideally, an ELL space will have access to storage for a large variety of materials (such as a complete book series, learning kits), classroom technology (such as several classroom laptop computers, a Mimio/interactive whiteboard, document camera, good quality audio setup for listening exercises, and video clips), moveable furniture for flexible groupings, and a teacher area with files for keeping student records. The ELL space will hopefully be large enough to provide independent spaces for one-to-one instruction that might happen simultaneously with a larger group instruction. Due to the small size of the ELL population, the space could also double as an intervention classroom or other support space.

Leicester Middle School has just one 0.15 ELL Teacher, which means that planning with classroom teachers is widespread. During the school day the ELL Teacher assess incoming students, runs the ACCESS Testing for ELL students, participates in team meetings, and communicate with parents – all on top of her teaching duties.

Proposed:

The proposed building project will afford the special education program to be an integral part of the school community and fully integrated into the academic teams. Ample classroom space, small group rooms, inclusion rooms, office space, testing space, meeting space, de-escalation space, and adaptive PE/occupational therapy space will be provided in order to best meet the educational needs of all students. Where possible, this program should be delivered within the same space utilized by all students. In instances where a specialized space is required for Occupational and Physical Therapy, this motor skills room should be adequate and would be similar to a full-size classroom; accommodating both gross and fine motor activities taught simultaneously. The IEP needs for students often recommend specialized motor equipment. The motor room should also allow space for gross motor activities, individual and/or small group therapy sessions. There would also need to be equipment for the children, including a large floor mat, balance beam, a swing, and a ball pit, as well as ample room for gross motor movement. Sensory motor activities and/or fine motor work would require a space for up to two tables and up to eight student chairs. If possible, one of the walls should be mirrored to allow students to model and demonstrate their skills. This design will afford more opportunities for students and staff to work horizontally and vertically, and to incorporate interdisciplinary ways to fully integrate special needs programming, while having the capacity to expand current program and develop new programming as population change and increase.

Living and Learning (Life Skills Self-contained Classroom))

Leicester Middle School will continue to house a growing need of specialized programs such as the current Living and Learning Program. These classrooms should be distributed throughout the general academic classrooms. These classrooms will necessitate a kitchen/laundry area for foundational skills to prepare students for the vocational program they will participate in at the next level of their education. Inclusion and pull-out instruction will continue to be offered dependent upon student needs. However, instruction should be fully integrated into the academic teams, facilitating opportunities for communication and collaboration. This room should have adjacencies with the nurse if possible.

Special Education

One of the goals of integrating the special education classrooms into the academic neighborhoods is to also give these students opportunities for hands-on project instruction at a pace which is appropriate to their developmental needs and skill set. By allotting a small amount of space to the special education program within the Maker/Builder space, the goal would be to ensure that there is sufficient area within the Maker/Builder space to allow these students to work either independently or as part of the general education group; with sufficient space to accommodate their specialized needs.

The Leicester Middle School will continue to support a full continuum of services for students through 8th grade. The implementation of a comprehensive interdisciplinary model will allow students to access the general curriculum in classes taught by both a general education content area teacher and a special education teacher. Self-contained programs will be strategically located in areas of the building to best support student access. All special education programs need to be located close enough to content and elective general education programming so that inclusive opportunities can be realized when possible.

Professional office and testing spaces will be designated for related service providers in the areas of: Speech and Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Behavioral Specialists, Reading Specialists, Adaptive Physical Education, School Guidance Counselors, School Psychologist, etc., as well as for the Team Chairperson.

The new middle school will include many smaller meeting rooms for individual and small group tutorials, outside therapists, and specialists. These rooms may be used for regular teacher/tutor meetings and for small group testing environments and will be fully immersed within the academic neighborhoods. Along with special education teachers, paraeducators and tutors will have shared space in an office with computer access for storing materials, etc. Currently Leicester Middle School partners with Community Health Link and is looking to expand its partnership with Becker College to bring in outside counseling services. Often these sessions struggle to find appropriate space. Within the new building, space will be created for these services to meet with students on a regular basis that ensures student confidentiality.

Critical to the success of special education programs and related service providers is the ability to observe students in their school environment. Consideration to the structure of learning spaces will provide opportunities for parents, teachers, and consultants who work closely and carefully with the special education population to observe and learn from one another.

Leicester Elementary School

Content Area	Grade Level	Co-Teaching Methodology
Inclusion Special Education Staff	K-4	Co-Teaching in grades 1-4 Inclusion support Small group academic support pull out services
Substantially Separate Classrooms	(2) PreK, K-4	
ELL	K-4	Small group instruction with one-one instruction.

Current design of the Leicester Elementary School does not allow for flexibility of grouping support for pull-out or ELL instruction.

Proposed:

The proposed building project will afford the special education program to be an integral part of the school community and fully integrated into the academic teams. Ample classroom space, small group rooms, inclusion rooms, office space, testing space, meeting space, de-escalation space, and adaptive PE/occupational therapy space will be provided in order to best meet the educational needs of all students. Where possible, this program should be delivered within the same space utilized by all students. In instances where a specialized space is required for Occupational and Physical Therapy, this motor skills room should be adequate and would be similar

to a full-size classroom; accommodating both gross and fine motor activities taught simultaneously. The IEP needs for students often recommend specialized motor equipment. The motor room should also allow space for gross motor activities, individual and/or small group therapy sessions. There would also need to be equipment for the children, including a large floor mat, balance beam, a swing, and a ball pit, as well as ample room for gross motor movement. Sensory motor activities and/or fine motor work would require a space for up to two tables and up to eight student chairs. If possible, one of the walls should be mirrored to allow students to model and demonstrate their skills. This design will afford more opportunities for students and staff to work horizontally and vertically, and to incorporate interdisciplinary ways to fully integrate special needs programming, while having the capacity to expand current program and develop new programming as population change and increase.

One of the goals of integrating the special education classrooms into the academic clusters is to also give these students opportunities for hands-on project instruction at a pace which is appropriate to their developmental needs and skill set. By allotting a small amount of space to the special education program within the flexible learning space, the goal would be to ensure that there is sufficient area to allow these students to work either independently or as part of the general education group; with sufficient space to accommodate their specialized needs..

Professional office and testing spaces will be designated for related service providers in the areas of: Speech and Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Behavioral Specialists, Reading Specialists, Adaptive Physical Education, School Guidance Counselors, School Psychologist, etc., as well as for the Team Chairperson.

Critical to the success of special education programs and related service providers is the ability to observe students in their school environment. Consideration to the structure of learning spaces will provide opportunities for parents, teachers, and consultants who work closely and carefully with the special education population to observe and learn from one another.

(Life Skills Self-contained Classroom))

The Elementary School has a need for Substantially Separate Classrooms. These rooms should have adjacencies to the Middle School Living and Learning program and the nurse if possible.

TRANSPORTATION, DROP-OFF, BUILDING ENTRANCES

The Leicester School Committee Transportation Policy states that students will be entitled to transportation to and from school at the expense of the public schools when such transportation conforms to applicable provisions of the Massachusetts General Laws. The Committee will provide transportation for students as follows:

- Kindergarten: All students, except those living in immediate proximity to the school, as determined by the Superintendent.
- Grades 1 - 3: Students living more than one mile from school.
- Grades 4 - 6: Students living more than one and one-half miles from school.
- Grades 7 -12: Students living more than two miles from school.

Exceptions to these guidelines may be made at the discretion of the Superintendent. This will apply particularly to any student who must travel in a hazardous area to and from school. These students will be transported regardless of the mileage limits listed. Beginning in the 2015-2016 school year, Leicester did away with bus fees and currently all students are not charged for transportation.

Proposed

- Parent drop-off/pickup should be in a separate location from the busses.
- Specialized transportation would drop off and pick up with the regular bus traffic
- Students who walk to school should have a safe way to walk to and from a school that does not interfere with traffic flow from busses or parent drop off/pick up.
- All entrances should be linked to employee badges
- Parking should be adequate for staff, visitors as well as for after-school activities which include night events at the school and athletic events after school hours.
- Adequate lighting on the building and in the parking lot
- An entrance that is secure for students (double door) from visitors. All entrances for students in grades 5-8 should also be separate from students in grades PK - 4.
- Traffic flow should integrate with the existing High School traffic patterns providing for a single entrance and exit from the campus.

SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND KEY ADJACENCIES

Shared Facilities

As stated in our introduction, we believe a K-8 complex offers us the opportunity to better share staff and resources across K-8. The auditorium, kitchen, gymnasium and library are the primary spaces that we would share and would allow for collaboration and sharing of both staff and resources. These facilities would be centrally located in the building and be made available to the community for events. While the head end room can be located elsewhere, the technology maintenance areas would ideally be located adjacent to a loading dock or other location with external access for receiving.

Leicester Middle School

The Leicester Middle School building is a 60-year-old facility originally designed as a high school. It includes small classrooms strewn along narrow two hallways and lacks all the functional, spatial, and adjacency relationships necessary to promote a 21st Century learning environment. Many program areas are isolated and do not have the necessary adjacencies to other key programs, and academic teams cannot be assembled within a cohesive and physically connected academic neighborhood. Special education and student support services have been shoehorned into available space and lack the necessary integration with remaining academic programs.

Proposed:

The Educational Visioning sessions conducted with faculty, staff, administrators, and building committee members provided much insight into the early planning of the proposed new 5-8 Leicester Middle School. Much of this insight is captured in the above-defined requirements for specific program areas. However, there are also overall functional, spatial, and adjacency requirements not mentioned above that were identified throughout the

discussions and are important to capture in the overall planning process. These items are either priority goals or are keys to ensuring that priority goals can be achieved. These concepts are summarized below in no particular order or prioritization.

The Leicester Middle School functions as a community school, promoting the positive attributes of such, and responding to the specific needs of the local population. Many of the schools amenities are booked each night for community activities including boy scouts, park and recreation sports, etc. A community is built upon relationships people have with one another in a place. These relationships are strengthened by involved parents and residents who share common experiences, activities, interests, and goals. The sense of community among the students, staff, educators, and administrators at the Leicester Middle School was identified by all as being extremely strong and one of the priority goals would be to promote the contagious spread of this strong sense of community to the entire town outside of the boundaries of the school campus. Parents and community members who are currently participating in school activities are highly involved and provide a strong sense of support. However, the current facility does not foster the engagement of neighborhood parents and residents, and the planning of the newly proposed facility should include considerations for how to facilitate a stronger engagement of the parents and residents. It must be a welcoming environment for not only students and staff but also for all residents of the neighborhood and associated businesses. The proposed facility should be designed in a way that allows visitors to experience student activity and work and to provide support for such in meaningful ways. Being able to strengthen the greater community through both ease of facilities use and the presentation and display of student work is of vital importance. Because visitors will not necessarily be privy to the day-to-day learning experiences of students, providing opportunities to view student work that is rigorous and engaging will help to build a sense of community between the school and the neighborhood residents. Other strategies for strengthening community may include a more accessible campus, shared work and conference areas for parents, program areas which can be shared by the neighborhood during non-school hours, exhibit areas for local businesses, and numerous other possibilities.

The connection of indoor and outdoor spaces is important to creating a vibrant and energized educational environment. Students can become more engaged in utilizing outdoor space if an effort is made to ensure the appropriate visual and physical connection. Outdoor space can be used beyond recreational use and can provide social space, classrooms, study areas, and other support areas for the educational environment. This would also provide an even better opportunity to utilize elements of the outdoor environment in a specific science and environmental instruction. Indoor/outdoor connections can also be reinforced through the use of indoor/outdoor transparency in key student activity and movement areas such as the student commons; and obviously the academic classrooms.

There has been much discussion herein about the academic grade-level teams that were discussed throughout the educational visioning process. Although the current facility does a very poor job providing appropriate space and organization, these educational neighborhoods are already in place at the Leicester Middle School in that the current middle school embraces a model that emphasizes teaming students. The team consists of general education teachers (Mathematics, Science, English Language Arts, and Social Studies) as well as a Special Education Liaison associated with Special Education programs connected to that particular team. While a team approach is utilized, the physical layout of the building inhibits the teacher's ability to provide interdisciplinary opportunities on a regular basis. In order for teachers to be able to facilitate the blending of multiple disciplines of academic instruction, the proposed new facility should organize these teachers into grade-level "Teaching and Learning Neighborhoods". These neighborhoods will contain general education classrooms, a dedicated science classroom, and a "commons" space to facilitate inquiry, presentation, community, project based learning,

teaming, and STEM. Each team will include opportunities for a small group work and study areas in flexible-learning spaces which allow students to move in and out of the classroom area without interruption. Special Education spaces for reading, resource, and inclusion will be an inherent part of each team. A shared teacher work, planning, and collaboration area in each neighborhood is an integral piece of the design and will allow collaboration on assignments, student progress, and the planning of rigorous cross-disciplinary opportunities. There was much discussion about how the individual grade-level teachers remain connected without being isolated into their individual neighborhoods, and the design process should explore the possibility of creating collaborative planning areas that keep teachers close to their neighborhoods but also allow them to collaborate across grade levels, with particularly strong connections between the 5th/6th staff and the 7th/8th staff. Although some separation is desired between the 5/6 students and the 7/8 students, the visioning group agreed that there were strong benefits to controlled connections between grade levels and that this connectivity should be explored during the design process.

Although most of the educational visioning discussions focused on the educational program within the building, there was also thoughtful discussion about the opportunities which lie within the redevelopment of the entire Leicester Middle School campus. These opportunities included functional improvements such as parking, drop-off, buses, and pickup, which were believed to have a significant impact on the student experience and identified as requiring more exploration and consideration during the design process. Leicester Middle School should be located on the same campus so that connections between Leicester High School continue with the district vision of eventually having all schools on the same campus.

Although many of the specific discussions surrounding the proposed classrooms and the maker/builder space are captured in other sections of the Educational Program, there were some conceptual ideas and visions that are equally important. Spaces utilized for 21st Century instructional practices should not segregate instruction from application. The modern comprehensive middle school environment must be a flexible space that accommodates both instruction and application. The maker/builder spaces that are dedicated to project-based learning should be highly integrated to the remaining academic classrooms and/or environment. It should allow for students to be creative and grow as learners throughout the course of their day. Additionally, teachers can collaborate with colleagues more easily through flexible spaces.

The flexible classroom is meant to describe an “area” rather than a specific room defined by four or more enclosing walls. This “Area” can be extended with strong connections to the maker/builder space and an ease of movement for students and teachers between the two areas. Staff and students agree that learning within a group of spaces that allow for varying approaches and environments, facilitated by a teacher or a combination of co-teachers, provides the best opportunity for varying learning styles and progress. In some instances, having as many as three contiguous spaces with the necessary supervision can allow the facilitators to customize the learning program for each student. Transparency between these spaces will be a key factor in the successful use of these collective spaces as a “flexible classroom”. Various options for balancing transparency with privacy and security should be considered throughout the design process. There was much discussion about the need for small group spaces integrated within the classrooms and neighborhoods. Some of these spaces require a high level of transparency for supervision and connectivity to remaining neighborhood spaces, while others may require more privacy but the same level of connectivity in terms of adjacency. There are also numerous physical characteristics required within the flexible classroom including ubiquitous technology and large-scale instructional walls which allow “every wall to be a teaching and collaboration wall”.

One of the key attributes of a strong school community involves the ability to personalize the school environment. This fosters a sense of ownership, belonging, and pride. The grade-level academic neighborhoods and student display spaces will provide an enormous canvas for the personalization of the school environment. They also will afford an opportunity to personalize the specific instruction being offered at each grade level. These spaces will allow educators to meet the needs of all students in an engaging, creative, and collaborative way. They should be flexible enough for the students to influence their organization and appearance, as they become reflective of the work being produced by the students. They should include opportunities for both short- and long-term exhibits and have the feel of a productive workshop for learning and exploration.

Leicester Middle School already has a number of key partnerships including but not limited to Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Mass Stem Hub, and Community Healthlink. The modern 21st Century middle school environment allows for the integration of the key subjects of Science, Mathematics, Technology, Engineering, and Arts into real-world business and scientific applications in an effort to help students not only understand the importance of these topics individually, but to also understand the way they support each other. It is critical that the newly proposed facility be designed in a way which helps to strengthen and expanded these business partnerships. This could include something as general as making sure that the school is easily accessible to these business partners, to providing specific exhibit and learning opportunities and exposure for each business within the school.

As parents have more daily demands and students become more involved in school-related activities, the time they spend on the academic campus has expanded. These activities include music, performance, athletics, research, science, academics, tutoring, and numerous extracurricular activities. Many students study after school as they await upcoming practices, performances, or activities that involve them or their friends. The school also becomes a safe haven for spending time in social and recreational activities. Providing appropriate and safe indoor and outdoor spaces for such activities is a key component of a successful Leicester Middle School environment. The following is a summary of the “Extended School Day” programs offered before and after school, covering a wide variety of academic and enrichment programs. Many of these clubs and activities culminate in evening or weekend events. Some examples include:

- Drama Club
- Morning Fitness Club
- Robotics Club
- Newspaper
- Yearbook
- Student Council
- Art Club
- CommuniTeen
- Dare 2 Care
- Dominion Club
- Fandom Club
- Graphic Novel Club
- Ukulele Club
- Teen Advisory Board
- Ski Club
- Floor Hockey Club
- Medic Ball Club
- Soccer
- Basketball
- Baseball/Softball
- Cross Country
- Indoor/Outdoor Track

These programs add to the need for flexible, multipurpose spaces that can address the needs of students “beyond the bell” and the needs of the support staff. The design, organization, location, and flexible use of these spaces will be critical to any newly proposed Leicester Middle School facility.

- Makerspaces
- Area for student collaboration and small group learning
- Area for staff collaboration
- Adequate library and media space
- Appropriate space for meetings
- Adequate sensory and de-escalation space
- Guidance Counselor/School Psychologist Suite
- Adequate nursing facility
- Separate music and art rooms
- Adequate storage for classrooms and custodial storage
- Auditorium/multipurpose room for performances
- Outdoor Learning spaces

SECURITY AND ACCESS

The Leicester Public Schools has made great strides in enhancing security within all schools, however building design hinders much of that progress. Students who feel safe and secure in their environment will be better prepared and more successful within their education. In order for students to excel within all the described disciplines, they must feel safe, secure, and confident.

Access Control System

All exterior doors will be electronically monitored and be unlocked by a card based access control system or by a push button intercom system. The exterior doors that provide access to playgrounds and the athletic fields will be unlockable by the card based system as well. The inner set of doors in the main entry vestibule will be locked at all times, except for drop-off and pickup times. Panic buttons will be located in the following areas: administration; Principal's office; certain secretarial staff; custodian's office; Assistant Principal's office. Stairwell doors can be pulled off mag holders and programmed locked by access control, securing upper floors from remaining areas. Access between buildings, age sensitive areas and restricted areas will be ensured by the card based access control system.

Security

Security Cameras will be placed around the exterior of the building, parking lots, hallways, stairwells, the administrative area, student dining, auditorium, courtyard, physical education areas, Library/Media Center, and any identified road entrances to the property. A camera will be placed on all entry doors into the building, as well as the interior hallways and shared spaces. Access to the security system should cloud based, and accessible from both inside and outside the building.