

## CHAPTER 13

### Education

Newburyport has a long history of striving to provide excellence in education. A strong public education system is essential to the individual and collective well-being of our country, our state, and our community. This commitment to education ensures that each child, in each of our schools, is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged. This is reflected in the recently revised Mission Statement:

*The mission of the Newburyport Public Schools, the port where tradition and innovation converge, is to ensure each student achieves intellectual and personal excellence and is equipped for life experiences through a system distinguished by students, staff, and community who: - practice kindness and perseverance - celebrate each unique individual - value creativity; experiential; rigorous education opportunities; scholarly pursuits; and life-long learning - provide the nurturing environments for emotional, social, and physical growth - understand and embrace their role as global citizens.*

The Newburyport Public Schools system is part of a collaborative, interdependent community that includes students, teachers, administrators, parents, citizens of the City, community organizations, and businesses. The public schools are the focal point for education in the community with a primary focus on educating the community's children. The Newburyport community is guided by leaders who have a shared vision and shared values about the significance of education to the overall community. Stakeholders within the community work collaboratively to advocate for and seek out the resources to provide staffing, training, facilities, materials, and equipment that support excellence in instruction and enable students to achieve high standards and expectations.

Newburyport's well-qualified and highly effective teaching force provides instructional experiences that are personalized and challenging for students. While the schools are governed by the School Committee working collaboratively with the superintendent; inquiring and reflective teachers share in the leadership of the schools and together regularly assess, question and change the schools' programs and functions to ensure that desirable student learning outcomes are achieved.

### Section A: Management, Enrollment, and Finance

#### ***Oversight, Management, and Faculty***

##### **School Committee**

Comprised of the Mayor, who is the Chair, and six members elected at-large for terms of four years, the role of the Committee, as defined by law, is to hire and evaluate the Superintendent of Schools, and ensure a budget adequate to meet the needs of the schools is developed and approved, and the school district has policies that ensure the schools meet the needs of the students as required by law. The purpose of the Committee, on behalf of the students, staff, parents and taxpayers of Newburyport, is to ensure that all students receive the best possible education that prepares them to be productive and responsible members of society. Additionally, the Committee ensures that the resources entrusted to the School system by the taxpayers are applied for maximum impact for students and are expended reasonably, responsibly and transparently.

### Superintendent

The Superintendent of Newburyport's schools is responsible for both the daily oversight and management of the public school system as well as being cognizant of the greater goals and overarching policies that govern the school system. The Superintendent is responsible for creating a yearly budget for the schools and presenting it to the School Committee for review as well as to the City Council for final approval.

### Structure within the Schools

- **Principals** – The daily management of each school is the responsibility of the principals. The Bresnahan School has one principal for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten and one principal and one assistant principal for first grade through third grade; the Nock-Molin school has one principal for grades four and five and a principal and assistant principal for grades six, seven and eight; the high school is managed by a principal and an assistant principal.
- **Faculty** – Newburyport Public School's faculty consists of teachers and support staff. Each school has its dedicated faculty to instruct students in a range of subjects necessary to provide a comprehensive college preparatory education using the Massachusetts Common Core Standards. The faculty also includes educators focused on providing special education services to those students in need of additional support. Support staff in the schools includes both part time and full time individuals who serve as aides in classrooms, providing an indispensable service to the faculty.
- **Staff** – In addition to the principals and faculty at each school, there are a number of department staff positions that ensure both the daily management needs and the long-term goals for each school are met. Staff includes administrative support in the offices as well as individuals who serve as directors of curriculum, athletics, special education, and technology.
- **Maintenance** – The City, through the School Department, owns and maintains four buildings currently in use as public schools. Newburyport Public Schools' Facilities Department manages the day-to-day custodial and maintenance operations at the schools. The Facilities Department is comprised of the Director of Facilities and nineteen full-time employees – sixteen custodian and three maintenance workers. The Department also hires ten young adults each summer to work with both the custodial team and the maintenance team. While the maintenance team floats among the buildings, the custodial staff is assigned to specific schools:
  - *Francis T. Bresnahan Elementary School* (the "Bresnahan") – five custodians;
  - *Edward G. Molin Upper Elementary School* and *Rupert A. Nock Middle School* (the "Nock-Molin") – while considered two schools, they share one building with five custodians; and
  - *Newburyport High School* ("NHS") – six custodians.

The bulk of the custodial and maintenance work is conducted by the staff. However, in the summer, carpet cleaning and some maintenance tasks and repairs, e.g. cleaning and performing maintenance on the boilers, are performed by outside subcontractors that are beyond the staff's technical expertise.

In addition to the managerial responsibilities, the Director oversees building projects at the schools and acts as the local project manager/liaison for large projects that require the hiring of an Owners Project Manager (OPM). An OPM is typically required when a project uses funds from the Massachusetts School Building Authority and the project costs exceed \$1.5 million. The Director works collaboratively with the Parks Department on field-related projects on school grounds.

## School Enrollment

### Public School Enrollment

The Newburyport Public School currently supports 2,289 students from pre-kindergarten through the twelfth grade. Table E-1 illustrates the breakdown of students per grade.

**Table E-1: 2016 Student Enrollment by Grade**

| School                  |       |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     | Totals |
|-------------------------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------|
|                         | Pre-K | K   | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9   | 10  | 11  | 12  |        |
| Bresnahan Elementary    | 62    | 136 | 132 | 171 | 142 |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     | 643    |
| Molin Upper Elementary  |       |     |     |     |     | 175 | 185 |     |     |     |     |     |     |     | 360    |
| Nock Middle School      |       |     |     |     |     |     |     | 158 | 187 | 165 |     |     |     |     | 510    |
| Newburyport High School |       |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     | 192 | 194 | 214 | 176 | 776    |

Source: Newburyport Public Schools, 2016

**Total: 2,289**

### School Choice

The Massachusetts School Choice Program allows parents to send their children to schools in communities other than the city or town in which they reside. Tuition is paid by the sending district to the receiving district to cover the costs associated with educating the student. School districts may elect not to enroll school choice students if there is no classroom space available.

Tuition rates are set at 75 percent of the prior fiscal year's operating costs per full-time equivalent pupil for the receiving district, with a cap of \$5,000. In addition to this, the actual special education cost for each pupil with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is paid in full by the sending district.

In Newburyport, whether or not to participate in the School Choice program is determined by vote of the School Committee. The vote typically occurs in mid- to late-February for the upcoming school year. Once the Committee approves the School Choice program, the administration determines seat availability for each grade levels and recommends opening availability in grades that have adequate space. The school district will then advertise that Newburyport Public Schools will be offering seats at the approved grades (for example, in 2010-2011, there was seat availability in grades 6, 7, 8 and 9). Once advertised the district accepts applications for the available seats and will conduct a lottery should there be more applicants than seats available.

Newburyport has historically participated in the school choice program; however, in recent years, the School Committee has elected not to participate due to the current classroom sizes nearing the maximum number of pupils. However, availability varies among grade levels and in May, 2015, the School Committee voted to allow school choice for full day kindergarten at the Bresnahan Elementary School for the 2015-2016 academic year due to there being a number of seats available while school choice for all other grades will not be offered.

### Additional Educational Options

In addition to the public school district, there are other educational options for students and families in the Greater Newburyport area. The River Valley Charter School (RVCS) is a regional Montessori public charter school located in Newburyport. The RVCS serves students enrolled in Kindergarten through the eighth grade. Enrollment for the 2015-2016 school year at RCVS was 288 students.

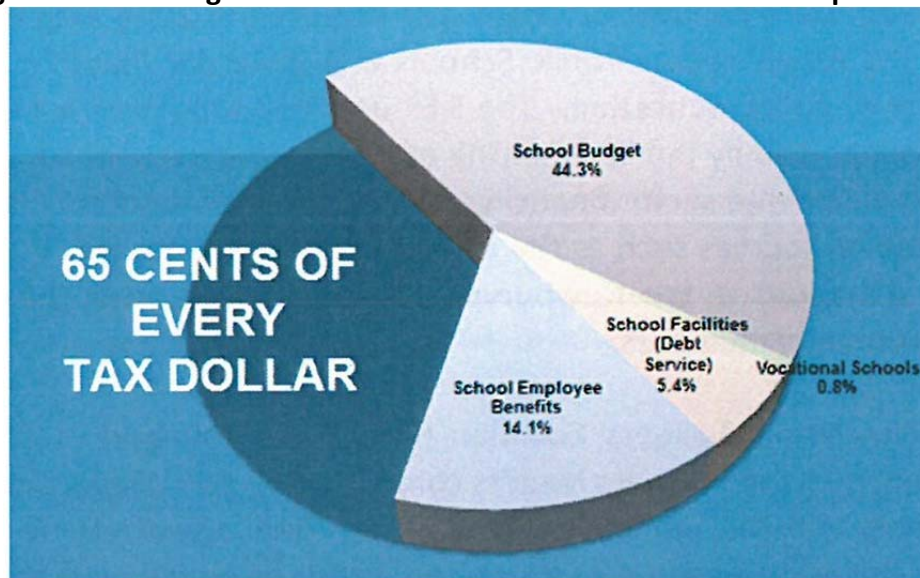
At the high school level, Newburyport is one of 11 area communities in a compact with Whittier Vocational Technical High School. Students develop the skills and specialized training they need to pursue a career in one of 22 vocational-technical fields. The current enrollment at Whittier is 1,338 students with 24 students attending from Newburyport.

There are two private schools in the City – the Immaculate Conception School, which provides education for kindergarten through the eighth grade, and a current enrollment of 272 students and the Newburyport Montessori School, which provides an education for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students, and has a current enrollment of 118 students.

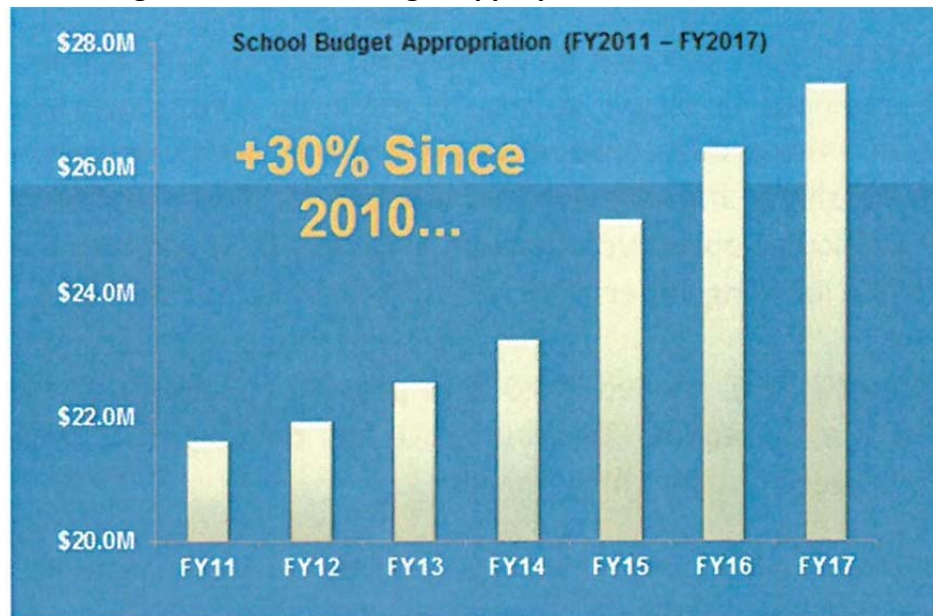
### Finance

The greatest challenge to the Newburyport school district is addressing the funding gap. **Figures E-1 and E-2** illustrate Newburyport's educational funding. **Figure E-1** shows that for every tax dollar, 65 cents goes toward education; of these 65 cents, 44.3% is for the school budget, 14.1% goes toward school employee benefits, 5.4% goes toward debt service on school building/facility projects and 0.8% is the City's obligation to the vocational schools. **Figure E-2** illustrates the fiscal year appropriations to the school budget. The appropriations have increased more than 30% since FY2010.

**Figure E-1: Funding for Education as a Portion of the Total Municipal Budget**



Source: Ethan Manning, Finance Director, City of Newburyport, 2015

**Figure E-2: School Budget Appropriations, FY2011-FY2017**

Source: Ethan Manning, Finance Director, City of Newburyport, 2015

## Section B: Facilities

The Newburyport Public Schools reconfigured the school structure in 2006-2007 due to significant cuts in State funding, essentially eliminating the neighborhood elementary schools, which provided kindergarten through fourth grade education. The Kelley School opened in 1873 and was one of the oldest, continuously operating school buildings in the state and was closed during this restructuring. The Bresnahan School, formerly Belleville School (1955), became the sole elementary school serving first through third grades; the Brown School (1923) provided pre-kindergarten and kindergarten classes but closed its doors in June, 2015. The Rupert A. Nock Middle School (1971) then restructured the middle school grades from fourth through eighth grades to fifth through eighth grades and created an upper elementary school, the Edward G. Molin Elementary School for grades four and five.

The construction of Newburyport High School was authorized in 1933 and its Federalist architecture continues to be highly regarded as a centerpiece to the former Mount Rural on High Street. Major renovations to the school building were completed in 2003. Recently, through a combination of funding sources include the Community Preservation Act, school and municipal budgets, the façade of the High School is being repaired and restored so that the structure will continue to be a focal point of the community.

The City worked diligently to enter the Massachusetts School Building Authority program to address the needs of the aging Bresnahan and Nock/Molin Schools with a successful debt exclusion vote in 2012. A new state-of-the-art elementary school for pre-kindergarten through third grade opened its doors in September 2015 and major renovations to the Nock/Molin were also completed at this time.



### School Buildings

- **The Bresnahan** – The new Bresnahan, constructed over the course of 2013 and 2014, opened its doors to students in the fall of 2015, replacing the original school building that sat on the same campus. The 112,500 square foot building is home to classrooms for children from pre-kindergarten through third grade as well as a cafeteria, gymnasium/auditorium and a library/media center. The Building facilities include an emergency generator and loading dock for deliveries. The Bresnahan shares its 17.5-acre grounds with the newly constructed Senior Community Center and features playgrounds for children ages two through 5 and for older children ages up to age twelve, a fenced basketball court and a paved play area. The school's 150 space parking lot provides adequate capacity for administrators, staff, faculty and visitors.
- **The Nock/Molin** – Constructed over the course of 1971 and 1972, this single building is home to Newburyport's fourth through eighth grade students. The Edward G. Molin Upper Elementary School and the Rupert A. Nock Middle School share the 160,015 square foot building, which contains an auditorium, cafeteria, gymnasium and library/media center. The building also houses an emergency generator and a 390 kilowatt photovoltaic system and a loading dock for deliveries. The 19.6-acre campus includes soccer, softball, and baseball fields (a new baseball field is under construction summer of 2015), tennis courts and outdoor basketball courts. The school's parking lot has 170 spaces for administrators, staff, faculty and visitors.
- **Newburyport High School** – Constructed in 1937, the City's public high school is home to students in grades nine through twelve. The school underwent a major renovation, which included an addition from 1999 to 2003; it is currently receiving a much-needed 'face lift' through a façade restoration effort partially



Bresnahan School  
Photo by Steve Bergholm



Nock/Molin School  
Photo by Ameresco



Newburyport High School  
Photo by Steve Bergholm

funded by the Community Preservation Act. Similar to the other Newburyport public schools, the 214,934 square foot building houses an auditorium, cafeteria, gymnasium and library/media center along with an emergency generator. The school's 13.3-acre campus includes a football stadium, which is currently under renovation to change from a grass field to an artificial turf one with an expected completion date in the fall of 2015 and a baseball field. The school's parking lot has approximately 100 spaces; many high school students drive to school and utilize on-street parking along High Street and in the immediate vicinity of the building.

### Athletic Facilities

- **Bradley Fuller Park** – Located adjacent to the Nock/Molin on Low Street, “Fuller Field” provides outdoor athletic space for all of the public schools and the community at large including a soccer field, track with infield, a discuss cage, shot put and long jump pits and a javelin throwing area. The field house includes male, female, and accessible restroom facilities and storage space. Parking for events at Fuller Field is provided at the Nock/Molin with handicap parking located at the field house. On-street parking along Low Street is often at a premium during sporting events.



Plan for Bradley Fuller Field  
Plan drawn by Huntress Associates, Inc.

Since the spring of 2014, the City has deemed the track at Fuller Field unsafe and off-limits for competitive events due to crumbling subsurface, erosion of top surface, and poor drainage leaving a void to the entire fitness and sports community of Newburyport. The Newburyport Parks Department received a FY2017 grant from the Community Preservation Act, which was coupled with several other funding sources ranging from private donations to municipal appropriations, to improve the facility. This improvement and renovation project includes a reconfigured, 8-lane, all-weather, 400-meter, oval running track with new long jump, triple jump, pole vault systems, shot-put landing area, shot-put pad, and discus pad with cage. Additionally, this project will enlarge the natural grass field in the center of the track, install wiring for future lighting and scoreboard, install new fencing and concrete walkways, and improve overall drainage of the site. A future phase of the project will improve the parking and drop-off area, construct a 500-seat grandstand, and a press box.



World War Memorial Stadium  
Photo by Huntress Associates

- **World War Memorial Stadium** – This stadium, located on the NHS campus, has recently undergone a major renovation including a new artificial turf field, grandstands, viewing platform and concession areas. This multi-purpose field is home to the high school football team but is available to a



variety of school athletic events and may be rented out to outside leagues. This major capital project was financed through funding from the Community Preservation Act, the municipal budget and private donations.

## **Section C: Educational Partnerships**

### ***Higher Education Partnerships***

The Newburyport School District is fortunate to be geographically situated in proximity to institutions of higher education:

- Northern Essex Community College, Haverhill
- North Shore Community College, Danvers
- Merrimack College, North Andover
- Endicott College, Beverly
- Salem State University, Salem
- University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH
- University of Massachusetts, Lowell

The City currently has partnerships with Northern Essex Community College, Endicott College and Salem State University. These partnerships have allowed the City to have fellows working in the public schools as well as a steady stream of student teachers. Additionally, the City is seeking to develop a robust program for its post-graduate students with disabilities.

### ***Other Educational Partnerships***

#### **Newburyport Education Foundation**

Launched in 2004, the Newburyport Educational Foundation (NEF) is a non-profit organization with the mission to bring philanthropy into the Newburyport Public Schools and generate financial resources that will enhance the quality of public education. The NEF provides supplemental funding for programs that are already supported by public financing at a basic level, but which can be substantially improved by additional private sector financing. Since 2004, the NEF has donated over \$2.2 million to the Newburyport Public School system.

Governed by a Board of Directors comprised of members of the community, the NEF works in concert with, but independent of, the Newburyport Public Schools. This partnership has resulted in the NEF has donating funds for literacy closets (online databases of books organized by Guided Reading levels), classroom libraries, community-based education programs (bus trips), new computer servers and computers at the elementary school. At the Nock/Molin, NEF installed eight state-of-the-art science labs, premier technology for each classroom, a music lab, a robotics land and new technology and computers. At the high school, funds launched the Virtual High School Program, donated technology including lap tops for science, a Distance Learning Lab, a photography lab, a portable math lab, teacher work stations, a world language lab and a state-of-the-art library media center. Across the district, NEF has donated funds for partnership grants and the Institute for Savings' Science Speaker series. In addition to providing direct financial resources, NEF can also facilitate donations from private entities; an example of this includes a donation from EBSCO Publishing of \$200,000 worth of databases to be used throughout the school district.

#### **Newburyport Education Business Coalition**



The Newburyport Education Business Coalition (NEBC) was founded in 1990 as a non-profit organization of educators and business leaders committed to establishing connections between Newburyport Public Schools and the workplace. One of the first organizations of its kind in New England, the NEBC has since become a recognized leader in providing educators and students alike with opportunities for meaningful, curriculum-based connections between our schools and our business community.

In 2010, the NEBC joined with NEF to consolidate efforts, and is now called the Business Coalition. The NEF Business Coalition strives to maintain strong working relationships and ongoing collaboration among Newburyport's businesses, organizations, and residents with skills and expertise to share and our schools' educators. These collaborations support and enrich the schools' curricular objectives through a variety of workplace learning activities and contribute to authentic learning experiences for our teachers and students.

## Section D: Strategic Plan

During the 2015-2016 school year, a group consisting of students, parents, educators, and community members worked to develop a strategic plan (the 'Plan') to consist of the mission statement, beliefs, parameters, and goals that would set the course of the school district over the coming five years.

### *Beliefs*

Each person is worthy of respect.  
A strong community celebrates individual uniqueness.  
Each individual has inherent worth.  
Opportunity stems from adversity, growth from mistakes.  
Through reflection we gain understanding.  
Compassion and empathy build community.  
Everything can be done with kindness.  
Individuals are responsible for their own actions.  
Attitude has power.  
We each have an obligation to serve one another.  
Trusting relationships require clear and open communication.  
A community is responsible for its individuals.  
Education is fundamental to an empowered, evolving society.

## *The Plan's Strategies and Actions*

| Strategy 1 | We will reimagine teaching and learning   |
|------------|---|
| Action 1   | All students' holistic and academic needs are met through teaching, curriculum, and assessment methods.                   |
| Action 2   | Assessment is used to guide instruction and curriculum, engage students in inquiry, and focus on the process of learning. |
| Action 3   | Communication of information to the District and the community is focused on reimaging teaching and learning.             |
| Action 4   | Support relationships and learning communities among teachers and administrators.   |

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| <b>Strategy 2</b> | <b>We will offer an array of opportunities for self-discovery and personal achievement.</b>   |
| Action 1          | Students are mentally, socially, and emotionally ready to learn.  |
| Action 2          | Students establish connections; apply higher order thinking skills and make learning relevant through meaningful experiences.                   |
| Action 3          | Students learn at a pace in line with their inner abilities (strengths and weaknesses) and contribute to their educational path and experience. |
| Action 4          | Explore flexible learning environments designed on competency based learning models.  |

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| <b>Strategy 3</b> | <b>We will maximize all internal and external resources</b>                                   |
| Action 1          | Community support for the achievement of the students' personal goals.                        |
| Action 2          | Costs will be reduced and revenues maximized in our school district.                          |
| Action 3          | Partnerships will be encouraged and developed both inside and outside of the school district. |

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| <b>Strategy 4</b> | <b>We will optimize our organizational design and operations.</b>   |
| Action 1          | Organizational structure meets the needs of our students.   |
| Action 2          | Schedule changes are made to meet the needs of our students.  |
| Action 3          | Technology will fully support the goals of the District.  |
| Action 4          | Schools will function as effective, professional learning communities.  |
| Action 5          | Design and cultivate flexible learning environments for optimal functionality and culture.                                      |
| Action 6          | Student growth and learning are enhanced by creative, rigorous, and expansive curricula.  |
| Action 7          | Place-based education initiatives are further supported and developed to enhance authentic learning opportunities for students. |

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| <b>Strategy 5</b> | <b>We will create a dynamic community among all stakeholders.</b>                             |
| Action 1          | A diversified community of stakeholders, who are invited, welcomed and affirmed.              |
| Action 2          | Stakeholders are aware of district-wide and school-level events, programs, and opportunities. |
| Action 3          | Stakeholders are involved in school events, programs, and learning opportunities.             |
| Action 4          | Students gain real world experiences through community and civic involvement.                 |
| Action 5          | Students have a voice in building community relationships.                                    |

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| <b>Strategy 6</b> | <b>We will create a culture that cultivates the best of everyone</b>   |
| Action 1          | Distributed Leadership – Everyone shares the responsibility of leadership and culture.                             |
| Action 2          | Engagement – Leadership will ensure that all constituencies have a voice so they are engaged.                      |
| Action 3          | Communication – District and school personnel will communicate to the community to improve culture and engagement. |

|                   |  |
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| <b>Strategy 7</b> | <b>We will provide supports so all students are ready and able to learn.</b>                       |
| Action 1          | Implementation of cohesive, vertically aligned Response to Intervention (RTI) at all grade levels. |
| Action 2          | Increase social, emotional learning at all grade levels.   |
| Action 3          | Increased play opportunities for students at all grade levels.                                     |
| Action 4          | Students have the tools necessary to appropriately and safely utilize technology.                  |
| Action 5          | Increased executive functioning at all grade levels.   |
| Action 6          | A safe and supportive school environment.  |
| Action 7          | Reduce student stress.   |

## Section E: Newburyport's Education Goals

### ***Goal E-1: Implement the Newburyport Public Schools' Strategic Plan***

A dedicated group of individuals have worked to create a strategic plan that will guide the District as it moves forward in the coming years. As the various strategies and actions outlined in the Plan are realized, the School Department will become stronger, will better serve the community, and will encourage all students in the pursuit of their educational, emotional, and personal goals.

### ***Goal E-2: Ensure that all academic and athletic facilities are maintained to provide a safe, productive environment for students and educators.***

The City has invested significant time and financial resources into upgrading all of Newburyport's public schools and associated athletic facilities. The community has supported several high-cost initiatives aimed at improving the overall school system: the construction of the new Bresnahan School, the upgrades to the Nock/Molin, the preservation of the high school's historic façade, the renovation of the World War Memorial Stadium and the complete refurbishment of the Fuller Field and Track. The School Committee and Department must create a plan as to how to fund and to prioritize ongoing maintenance of all of these facilities so they will remain in good repair and not suffer from deferred maintenance.

### ***Goal E-3: Continue to develop a curriculum that meets the needs of all students and prepares them for the next phase of their lives, whether this includes attending an institute of higher education, pursuing a trade or entering the work force.***

Newburyport is committed to building a guaranteed and viable curriculum for all students. Teachers and administrators must delve into the process of examining student work and progress (or lack of significant progress) to continue to update and refine students' course of study. In examining student work and progress, administrators are able to make data driven decisions that support continuous improvement. The Newburyport School Department, through its curricula, must prepare students for their next steps in life so that they will go on to become thoughtful, engaged adults.