



It's not unusual to see students receiving instruction in hallways and closets at AE/MS. Photo: Gretchen Hildebrand

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These may include, but are not limited to, resource rooms, classroom aides, individual aides, counseling, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, health services, behavior intervention, and modification of classroom curriculum and testing.

For children who do not require special education services, there is Section 504 of the **Rehabilitation Act** of 1973, which prohibits discrimination against students with mental or physical disabilities who attend public school. Meeting the requirements of Section 504 may include administration of medication, use of special equipment, counseling, and test modifications.

Title I of the **Elementary and Secondary Education Act** of 1965 is aimed at meeting the educational needs of low-achieving children. This includes working with children individually or in small groups to boost their level of achievement in reading and math.

The **No Child Left Behind Act** of 2001 is a sweeping overhaul of federal efforts to improve K-12 public education nationwide. It requires a system for measuring student progress, development of standards of proficiency in math, reading and language arts, and science. The entire student body, as well as subgroups like students with disabilities, disadvantaged children, or children with English as a second language, must show "adequate yearly progress." Extra help in the classroom from teacher's

aides, reading specialists, and others is often needed to achieve this.

Reading Recovery is a program specifically designed to help young readers in the first grade and requires working with children individually.

Technology Education requirements necessitate instructing children in keyboarding skills, Internet-based research, word processing, spreadsheets, and other skills in order to graduate.

Space Needs

We are fortunate to have enough classrooms to accommodate all of our grade levels. However, as we build the programs required to meet the needs of all our students, we find a serious lack of space. In some cases, support services are being provided in hallways and closets.

Groups with as many as six students meet in the tiny closet off the lobby to receive help in the areas of neuro-muscular development, fine motor skills, and sensory processing, all necessary for success in reading and writing. Several specialists share the school library and Elementary Resource Room. The Middle School Resource Room is overcrowded and windowless. Conference space is seriously lacking. Testing space is lacking. These space needs were identified and documented in the Educational Facility Needs Assessment done in December of 2005.

The proposed school bond will allow us to renovate the current gym/cafeteria/kitchen into the necessary spaces for the programs outlined above. At the

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School Board Weighed Many Options

By Vicky Mishcon
Andover School Board

The facilities project to be proposed at Andover School District meeting is the result of much hard work and diligent research by the Andover School Board and many members of the community. Along the way, many options were carefully considered.

The process began with the AE/MS Long Range Plan calling for the development of a facilities plan. Toward that end, an Assessment of Educational Facility Needs was completed. Needs for additional space for educational programs were identified as well as a larger cafeteria/kitchen/gym, conference room, work space, and storage.

The next step was to complete an architectural study that could explore building and renovation options to meet the educational facility needs. Finally, the Facility Task Force reviewed the information from the studies and developed a list of priorities for the School Board to address in a building improvement project.

The Board reviewed the list of priorities and, with the help of the architect and engineer, assigned estimated costs to each item. In an effort to keep costs reasonable, the Board eliminated all but the most necessary priorities and asked the architect to come up with several options for the Board to consider.

Some of these options were:

- **Demolish the 1934 section of the school** and enlarge the footprint to allow for additional classroom space. Build new cafeteria/kitchen/gym. Renovate current gym into educational space. This would eliminate an old building requiring constant maintenance.

This was the most expensive option and cost prohibitive. Rebuilding the 1934 building would cost approximately \$2,765,000 alone, and would only give us two extra rooms. By the time a new gym is added and renovations to the old gym are done, the project total was close to \$8 million dollars.

- **Expand and rehabilitate current cafeteria/kitchen/gym into Corson Field.** Build new classrooms on the Middle School wing.

Rehabilitating the current gym does

not give us the current standard gym ceiling height or floor space. Asbestos removal and resurfacing the floor would cost \$115,396. Relining the floor with standard 10 foot runout behind each basket would reduce the court size by 19%. This is not a permanent solution.

Expanding the current gym to meet today's standards would require raising the side walls to reach proper ceiling height. This would require new footings, new foundation work, and major structural enhancements. The cost ends up being the same as building a new gym, approximately \$1,490,730.

Expanding into Corson Field eliminates the school's playing field, and filling in part of the wetlands to create a new field is expensive. Permits are required, and trucking in backfill would be costly. The survey response to filling in the wetlands was unresponsive (61 No, 43 Yes).

New construction to include two classrooms, instructional areas for special education and regular education support services (now in hallways and closet and shared spaces), storage, and relocation of art and music rooms would cost approximately \$1,856,500.

Keeping the gym in the center of the school facility does not address security concerns.

- **Build a new cafeteria/kitchen/gym behind the school on Corson Field.** This puts the gym at the back of the building, away from parking. This would not allow space for an access road around the entire facility, which is a safety concern for emergency services. This option, like the one above, eliminates the school's playing field.

- **Build a new cafeteria/kitchen/gym at the front of the Middle School Wing** and renovate current cafeteria/kitchen/gym into educational, storage, conference, and work room space. This is the option that the School Board is proposing. Total cost of project: \$3.8 million, with over \$1 million of the cost coming from the state.

This option requires the removal of the Hamp House and relocation of the after-school program. The Hamp House property was purchased by the District

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