

NORTHEAST METROPOLITAN REGIONAL VOCATIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Carla A. Scuzzarella, Ed. D.
Principal-Deputy Director

Mr. Matthew Denninger, Director of Resource Allocation Strategy and Planning
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street
Malden, Massachusetts

RE: Northeast Metropolitan Regional Vocational School, Wakefield, MA

Dear Mr. Denninger:

The District is pursuing execution of a Project Scope and Budget Agreement for the MSBA- approved preferred schematic for a new Northeast Metropolitan Regional Vocational School ("Northeast Metro Tech"). In accordance with MSBA requirements, the following is a description of the current and proposed special education programs and specialized programs at Northeast Metro Tech. These descriptions are consistent with the District's Educational Program dated December 21, 2020 submitted for this project as part of the Preferred Schematic report.

Current Program

Briefly describe the District's special education programs and methodology district-wide, including the number of special education students currently served:

Northeast Metro Tech is a regional vocational high school serving grades 9 through 12. The District's Special Education approach is one of inclusion, to the greatest extent possible. We have no substantially separate programs that require dedicated, self-contained classrooms. At Northeast Metro Tech we believe all students are capable of learning-through the integration of the efforts of the communities, parents, administration, faculty, students, and staff-we are committed to supplying our students with a rigorous academic and career/technical education in an open, diverse, and supportive environment. One of our main goals is to have students both college and career ready upon graduation. We strive to create inclusion learning communities. 76% of our students on IEPs are instructed in a Full Inclusion model and 24% percent in a Partial Inclusion model. Students that fall in the partial inclusion category receive some of their instructional services outside of the general education setting.

Currently, approximately 310 students (twenty-four percent - 24%) of Northeast's students are on Individualized Education Plans (IEP's).

Specifically describe all special education programs serving an age range of students that would be appropriate to the grade range of the subject school building. Include a description of all special education services provided in the subject school building or other school buildings within the school district that serve the same grade levels:

Northeast Metro Tech is a regional vocational high school serving grades 9 through 12 consisting of a single school building. As described above, the primary special education delivery model is one of inclusion where students receive services in co-taught classrooms. Additionally, we have some students that require instruction in a separate setting.

Inclusion Programming (full/partial):

Seventy-six percent of our students on IEPs receive support in an inclusion model. Students with mild to moderate disabilities receive special education services within the general education. The delivery of services in general education classrooms is documented in the service delivery grid of the student's IEP and can occur in the following ways:

- **Consult:** the general education curriculum can be accommodated and modified for the students' needs by the general education teacher in consultation with the special needs teacher and/or the related service provider.
- **Co-teaching:** The general education curriculum is delivered by both the general and special education teacher, using a method of delivery that is determined by the needs, educational goals, and styles of the students within the classroom.
- **Academic Support:** Special education teacher leads instruction in a small group setting following instruction in the general education setting to support the provision of accommodations and modifications per the IEP.
- **Special Education direct teaching (Learning Center/partial inclusion):** English, math, and science classes are taught by a special education teacher. The curriculum follows the same units of study, benchmarks, quizzes, tests and end of year exams as the general education class. However, given the extreme limitations of the students, class sizes are reduced, content is differentiated and learning activities individualized to student needs.

Describe any deficiencies in the existing program that may have been identified locally or through state review:

In assessing the District's current facility using the Special Education Rubric/Regulations, the following is noted:

With respect to **ensuring access:**

1. **Do the facilities and classrooms for eligible students maximize their inclusion into the life of the school?** No, all academic classrooms are located on three floors, only one of which is accessible to all students. Consequently, schedules must be established and adjusted for

student needs. Special Education specific classrooms are designated on the first floor which is accessible to all students. The deficiencies of our current facility with respect to integration with our technical areas and inadequate square footage pertain to special education classrooms as well as regular education classrooms. It should also be stated that the overwhelming majority of our special education students are integrated within our regular education classrooms providing the least restrictive environment. However, even in those classrooms, accommodations for disabilities such as hearing impairment have had to be built into some classrooms rather than Universally Designed causing significant scheduling issues.

2. **Do all eligible students have access to school facilities including, but not limited to, those areas necessary to implement the student's IEP?** No, students with certain disabilities do not have equal access to all school facilities because of the facilities limitations.

Proposed Program

Describe any programs/services that will continue, those that will be eliminated and those that will be added or enhanced as a result of the proposed project. Include programs or services that will be moved within the District as a result of this construction plan and include the number of special education students that will be served in the subject school building:

The inclusion model will continue to the greatest extent possible with generally the same delivery methodology. These services will be enhanced by increasing the number, type and location of the special education support spaces. We foresee a Special Education program that aligns with our desire to have Small Learning Communities. As such, we would prefer to have one Learning Center (full-size classroom), one Small Group (half-size classroom), and one Tutoring space per cluster/ small learning community for assessment and direct instruction with students. In addition, there should be a more centralized administration area including the Director's office, secure file area, and a dedicated conference room to accommodate the numerous meetings with parents and specialists, located near the main visitor's entrance.

Northeast Metro Tech is a regional vocational high school serving grades 9 through 12 consisting of a single school building. No programs or services will be moved within the District as a result of this construction plan. It is anticipated that the percentage of students receiving special education services will remain approximately consistent with the current percentage (24%). Therefore, with the projected increased overall enrollment of the school to 1600 students, we project that approximately 384 special education students will be served in the new school.

- 1) **Learning Center Classrooms (ELA, Math, Science):** The English, math and science special education teachers are dual certified in special education and the high school content area they teach (ELA, Science, Math). These classes are offered in a small setting of less than 16 students. Teachers are supported with one or two paraprofessionals depending upon the size of the cohort. The curriculum follows the same units of study, benchmarks, quizzes, tests and end of

year exams as the general education class. However, given the extreme limitations of the students, class sizes are reduced, content is differentiated and learning activities individualized to student needs. If still attending their sending district, these students would be placed in multi-age programs, alternative learning labs, placed out to collaborative placements, and or have 1:1 Assistants in the new building the special education English, math and science labs can also be used for small group instruction and small group project work from co-taught classes on an as need basis.

Learning Center classes: ELA, Math, Science Strengths: Many of the students in Learning Center (special education) content classes have previously been in substantially separate programming in their resident district. Students in this programming are taught using the same curriculum as general education peers, just modified to their individual levels. These are students, who if they returned to their sending districts would be in self-contained programs while at CCT- they are fully included in MCAS, OSHA, electives, physical education, and all shop and shop theory programs including preparation for certification and licensure exams. Whenever possible, students are moved out of special education via the IEP process to general education classes with accommodations.

Learning Center: ELA, Math, Science Limitations: In the current building we only have one designated room for Learning Center classes in math. We utilize other open rooms for English and science Learning Center classes. These rooms are in use 6 periods a day as they are also used for general education classes. Opportunities to use the spaces for small group work, group projects, quiet 1:1 testing are limited and sometimes must be scheduled concurrently with the room in use or at a later date when an empty classroom can be located. In the new building both academic support and special education classroom spaces are planned allowing for far greater programming and flexibility of support. The academic support spaces will also be available to support special education students who are enrolled in general education content classes and who require some small group support in a breakout space such as will be provided in the new building.

- 2) **Speech and Language Office:** Currently, the district has one part-time contracted speech therapist (3 days a week). The current speech and language room is very small and does not allow for groups greater than two.

In the new school the Speech Language Pathologist requires an office that can hold small groups of students and a confidential workspace. It should be located among the academic classrooms.

- 3) **Reading Services:** Currently, we have one Reading Specialist. The Reading Specialist works 1:1 or in small groups of students. Presently, the Reading Specialist has a small office that can accommodate up to 2 students. In the new school the Reading Specialist requires an office that can hold small groups of students and a confidential workspace. It should be located among the academic classrooms.
- 4) **School Psychologist:** As part of the legal special education evaluation process, students must be evaluated to determine if the student not only has an educational disability but if that student requires specially designed instruction or related services to make progress in the curriculum. For initial or 3 year re evaluations, students participate in a formalized process using standardized measures. The evaluations must be conducted in a private confidential space free

from disruptions and distractions. This space must be available for varying lengths of time, as students may take longer to complete such evaluations than others. Additionally, there are students that may require more substantial transition functional assessments.

Currently, the school psychologist has a small office located across from our gymnasium. This is a high traffic area that is often full of distractions and disruptions. This office should be located in close proximity to the special education office

- 5) Adjustment Counselors:** Northeast currently employs six (6) Adjustment/Guidance Counselors. Counselors are dual certified. Due to the nature of their work, each of these positions requires a private office and a conference room as well as access to classrooms. Counselors deliver a comprehensive Guidance Curriculum in a variety of ways. Curriculum is delivered one to one, in small groups and in large groups. Students utilize the Adjustment/Guidance Offices for social emotional, academic, and personal needs, as well as for college and career planning. Individual counselor offices and a conference room are needs of the Guidance Department in order to continue this work.

For the 2020-2021 school year, the Adjustment/Guidance Counselors were located in the offices of the Assistant Principal and two Vocational Deans. This was year two of this configuration and it should continue in the new facility. Counselors' offices should be distributed among the Small Learning Communities. Counselors are paired with an administrator with whom each shares students. These students are broken up by Career/Technical Program. This allows for direct work in Small Learning Communities and collaboration between the Administration and Adjustment/Guidance Counselors

- 6) English Language Learners:** The ELL program serves approximately 52 English Language Learners and 72 former English Learners that need to be followed up with for four (4) years once they become English proficient. Some of our students are also students with 504's or IEP's.

In order to fulfill our responsibilities, the program suggests the Office / Testing space with the following:

- 1) ELE Office - WIDA Access testing area / Lab
- 2) Full digital capabilities
- 3) Dedicated secretarial help
- 4) Appropriate technology

A WIDA/Access testing room/lab designated to test and tutor ESL students equipped with:

- an LED projector
- screen
- Wifi
- movable desks
- book shelves
- a Chromebook cart with at least 15 chromebooks
- space for 2 cabinets

Building Needs:

Team Meeting Spaces: The Special Education Department has limited options for a dedicated team meeting space. We have one small space and cannot handle more than an eight (8) person team comfortably. Larger teams require scheduling for use in the school conference room - which is always in high demand.

The Special Education Department requires access to larger conference room space. In certain cases team meetings include at least 15 people. At times IEP meetings can last two hours. This needs to be considered when determining space needs.

A new facility should have a dedicated Special Education Office space for small team meetings and an adjacent Conference Room to accommodate up to 12 people.

Identify any program/ service needs that the District hopes to address in the proposed project:

There are no new programs or services that the District will be addressing in the new project.

Provide the date of the last Coordinated Review Program and list any issues and/ or problems identified in that review:

The District's most recent Coordinated Program Review occurred during the 2014-2015 school year (February 9-12, 2015) and the District was issued a corrective action plan to complete for Special Education in fourteen areas. The following areas were identified as Partially Implemented: SE 2, SE 3, SE 7, SE 8, SE 12, SE 13, SE 14, SE 24, SE 40, and SE 54. The following areas were identified as Not Implemented: SE 3A, SE 19, SE47, and SE 56. All areas in the action plan were completed at the mid-cycle review during the school year 2018-2019.

Provide the current status and/ or remedy of those issues identified as part of the review:

All areas in the action plan were completed at the mid-cycle review during the school year 2018-2019. We recently submitted our PSM Tiered Focus Monitoring (10/2020) for our Onsite Year 2020/2021 and are currently awaiting our results.

Describe the local review process leading to the decision as to the number, type and location of special education spaces within the planned building:

The District Administrative Team consists of the Superintendent-Director, Principal/Deputy-Director, Administrator of Student Services, Finance Director, and Special Education Administrator. The High School Leadership Team consists of the Principal/Deputy-Director, Assistant Principal, Vocational Deans (two), the Academic Program Coordinator, Administrator for Student Services, and the Special Education Administrator. All of the above were consulted as part of the process to develop the proposed number, type, and location of special education spaces within the planned new building.

Describe any special circumstances that led to the decision to locate self-contained special education classrooms and other support spaces in certain areas of the building:

There are no self-contained special education classrooms proposed in the new building. The proposed support spaces are located to support the school's overall organization of Small Learning Communities. As such, we will have at least one Learning Center (full-size classroom), one Small Group (half-size classroom), and one Tutoring space per small learning community for assessment and direct instruction with students. Each of these support spaces shall be in close proximity to general classrooms within the flow of academic areas.

Describe the grade and school configuration policies:

Northeast Metropolitan Regional Vocational School District consists of a single school building serving grades 9 through 12.

Specialized Program

Provide a description of all specialized programs that the District currently provides or participates in, both in and out of the District. Also describe any programs the District is planning to add to its current programs as part of the proposed school building project:

Northeast Metro Tech does not currently provide or participate in any specialized programs. We are not planning to add any specialized programs as part of the proposed school building project.

Northeast Metro Tech does not currently participate in any Collaboratives. We are not planning to participate in, nor house any Collaborative programs as part of the proposed school building project.

We believe that our students can be accommodated within the general education setting in either the full or partial inclusion model. Should a student require a setting we do not offer, we collaborate with their sending district to determine appropriate placement.

Describe alternative education programs that the District currently provides or participates in, and whether the programs will continue or be supported in the proposed project:

Northeast Metro Tech does not currently provide or participate in any alternative education programs. We are not planning to participate in, nor house any alternative education programs as part of the proposed school building project.

Describe if and how the District delivers Pre-K or Early Childhood Special Education Programs, the location of these services, how or if these services are offered to non-special education eligible students, how they are accessed, and whether these services are or will be accommodated in the proposed project:

Northeast Metropolitan Regional Vocational School District consists of a single school building serving grades 9 through 12. We do not serve Pre-K or Early Childhood special education students.

Describe any programs with other private or public entities and the relationships that exist with other entities that may impact the District's Special Educational Programs and if they are to be accommodated in the proposed project:

There are no other programs or public or private entities that impact Northeast Metro Tech's special education programs.

Sincerely,

Northeast Metropolitan Regional Vocational School District



David DiBarri
Superintendent-Director



Carla Scuzzarella
Deputy Director/ Principal



Victoria Colaianni
Special Education Administrator