



Natick Public Schools

BUSINESS OFFICE

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April 3, 2025

TO: Melissa Spash, Superintendent
School Committee
FROM: Matthew J. Gillis
RE: MSBA Enrollment Projection Analysis

Overview

As part of the eligibility phase, submit a decent amount of information about Natick so MSBA can get a closer look at if we are matched for their grant program to construct or renovate a new Memorial School. Enrollment, and a finalized enrollment projection, is one of the main drivers in the scope of the project and how many square feet (SF) MSBA will approve to reimburse. Simply, the more students approved via enrollment projection, the more SF MSBA will approve to reimburse for this project. The goal is to get a right sized new Memorial for the next 50 years.

Enrollment History

**Actual Enrollment,
MSBA Tool**

The following is the actual enrollment as of October of each year for the last ten years as provided by the district to the DESE. Years that are shaded in gray were entered by the district in this form.

School Year	K	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8	G9	G10	G11	G12	Total
2024-25	367	364	359	435	373	401	421	407	409	394	436	422	385	5173
2023-24	359	354	425	371	392	429	404	412	414	433	427	381	378	5179
2022-23	356	418	368	395	420	405	411	404	442	420	395	380	394	5208
2021-22	406	359	382	421	394	413	409	434	412	394	384	387	381	5176
2020-21	332	393	417	405	414	422	430	411	401	379	380	383	408	5175
2019-20	407	421	423	425	429	447	421	406	388	392	387	408	439	5393
2018-19	424	436	434	428	445	450	406	402	383	384	408	430	378	5408
2017-18	426	443	429	435	458	423	405	380	378	396	433	374	397	5377
2016-17	448	433	442	465	424	414	400	380	402	423	364	383	369	5347
2015-16	435	456	462	441	417	407	372	402	418	381	393	361	378	5323

Comparison Summary

Projection, MSBA Tool																
This baseline projection was created using data already populated in the questionnaire as well as information provided by the district in the previous pages. This is only intended to indicate general trends in district enrollment and is not intended on its own to establish the enrollment for a proposed school project. Districts that have received an invitation to the MSBA's Eligibility Period portion of the grant program will be encouraged to introduce additional factors that may impact the enrollment projection that informs the proposed project.																
School Year	K	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8	G9	G10	G11	G12	Total	Natick Total K-12 (3-Yr Avg)	Difference
2025-26	329	373	365	361	430	377	393	420	409	402	395	432	424	5110	5186	(76)
2026-27	321	334	375	368	357	435	370	392	422	402	402	391	433	5002	5177	(175)
2027-28	355	327	336	377	363	361	426	369	394	414	402	398	392	4914	5140	(226)
2028-29	312	361	328	338	373	367	354	425	371	387	415	398	400	4829	5068	(239)
2029-30	300	317	362	330	334	377	360	353	427	364	388	411	400	4723	5012	(289)
2030-31	288	305	318	365	326	337	370	359	355	419	364	384	412	4602	4954	(352)
2031-32	287	293	306	320	360	330	331	368	361	348	420	361	385	4470	4900	(430)
2032-33	286	292	294	308	316	364	324	330	370	355	349	416	362	4366	4826	(460)
2033-34	285	291	293	296	304	320	357	323	332	364	355	346	418	4284	4779	(495)
2034-35	284	290	292	295	293	308	314	356	324	326	364	352	347	4145	4754	(609)

I shaded the text blue, because this is typically an early estimate, in my experience often on the low enrollment side, from MSBA. It is always easier (managing expectations) to add as the process proceeds than to reduce from initial reimbursement estimates. The purple numbers are from the in-house projection I will share with our submittal. School Committee feedback in 2023 about NESDEC being inaccurate in multiple years had me review the methodology to get closer estimates without adding any factors in the projection equation.

Note 1 – MSBA's tool is looking at K-12

Note 2 – The SOI requested PK (5 classrooms) be included in the Memorial Project

Note 3 – This projection is likely to be reconciled later in the process, not solely with this submittal

Note 4 – K enrollment updates for FY26 will impact this projection

Note 5 – MSBA makes the rules for the process and holds the gold, so we follow their process; we may get to update our FY 25-26 enrollment before this process (Eligibility Phase) is finalized in approximately October.

Analysis Part 1

It appears MSBA is using a ten-year history to project to calculate the factor for ten-year projection. The effect, for Natick, and especially when two of those ten years are artificially lowered by government policy during the pandemic, is a lower projection for student enrollment used in planning

space needs and what the state will contribute to the cost of a new school. Applied, we may believe we need 80,000 SF and if the state approves 65,000 SF, that means Natick has the option to build smaller or pay the full price for the SF MSBA does agree to reimburse.

In my experience, in some ways the world has changed rather rapidly and in other ways what parents want for their children has not changed. Parents want: safe neighborhoods and schools, an education that provides opportunities after Grade 12, a welcoming school environment, and opportunities to grow outside of the classroom via sports, arts, clubs and activities. Natick provides all of the above and does so more affordable than most of its neighbors, so the desire to attend NPS and remain through graduation is pretty stable.

Analysis Part 2

Please review the two in-house projection summary sheets. I include the 3-yr average for the multiplier shaded in yellow on the left of the projection. The five-year projection multiplier is shaded light blue. Every multiplier above 1.0 results in projection increase, and every projection below 1.0 results in projection decrease, and of course exact 1.0 results in no mathematical change. The aggregate average from K to 12 is above 1.0 for both in-house projections, indicating enrollment is largely stable once students enter NPS for Kindergarten. Note: The five-year projection likely underestimates enrollment and is for reference and comparison only.

The cells that have blue outlines track the FY26 Kindergarten class as they progress through each grade. As of March 26, 2025, we have 330 students enrolled for next year. MSBA's early tool has Natick at 329 K students for next year, 2025-26. Between now and the first day of school may net another 20-30 Kindergarten students. Not all parents know to enroll in K the spring before their child starts school. Every school system has some late spring and summer registrations, and Natick is no different. So, we will very likely have more actual K students than in the initial projection year and that will change the projection so *we are less likely* to undersize the building.

**Natick In-house Projection, 3 Yr
Avg, Cohort Survival**

Cohort Survival Method, 3 YR Avg, Removes outlier /anomaly years FY21 & FY22, post Pandemic

School Year	K	G1	G2	G3	G4	K-4 Total	CRs K-4 /20	CRs K-4 /23
2025-26	344	364	361	434	370	1873	94	81
2026-27	336	348	371	369	434	1858	93	81
2027-28	341	355	379	368	368	1811	91	79
2028-29	340	364	347	363	378	1792	90	78
2029-30	328	344	371	355	362	1760	88	77
2030-31	328	332	351	379	354	1744	87	76
2031-32	328	332	339	359	378	1736	87	75
2032-33	328	332	339	346	358	1703	85	74
2033-34	328	332	339	346	345	1690	84	73
2034-35	328	332	339	346	345	1690	84	73

K enrollment for Sept will be better known and may exceed MJG's projection or MSBA's projection

Conclusion Summary

Last, but not least, NHS, opened in 2013, was designed for about 1,400 students and the building has been over capacity almost immediately after opening. Kennedy is at capacity in just a few years. Wilson is almost full and all other schools are effectively slightly over capacity or the 5 PK classrooms at the East school would fit in our elementary schools

Hopefully, this demonstrates we are aware of the process and probable outcomes and will advocate for Natick appropriately to get the right size elementary school.

CC: Stephen Meyler, SBC Chair

CC: James Errickson, Town Administrator