The Quest for Excellence in Education
2004

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Newburyport Education Foundation
The Quest for Excellence in Education

The towering brick façade of Newburyport High School stands proudly on a hill on High Street. For the better part of the last century, it has stood as a symbol of classical strength and beauty, and represents Newburyport’s long-standing commitment to providing its youth with a quality education.

A challenging public educational program requires investment in continual improvement. Today, that investment is threatened by the pressures on school operating costs. Government mandates, rapidly expanding technology, and escalating special education costs crowd out the infrastructure and program improvements that educators and community members identify but are unable to fund without reducing services. Without help, the public schools cannot fully support the initiatives needed to meet today’s increasingly important educational mission.

Quality education is a cornerstone of our community’s economic prosperity. Good schools are a criterion for homebuyers, for businesses seeking to relocate, and for employees making the decision to work in our community. Investment in our schools is an investment in our future workforce and the continued economic health of our community—and one that will have an immediate impact on 2,400 school children, their parents, and teachers.

The Newburyport Education Foundation invites you to read more about how you can be part of our Quest for Excellence.

What is the Newburyport Education Foundation?

*The Mission of the Newburyport Education Foundation is to bring philanthropy into the Newburyport Public Schools and generate financial resources that will enhance the quality of public education.*

Formed in 2000 to enhance educational opportunities for the Newburyport Public Schools, the Newburyport Education Foundation seeks to supplement the basic level of support provided by public financing. Its goal is to secure additional private sector financing for improvements to the schools’ programs and facilities. The Foundation also seeks to finance programs that might not receive funding from traditional sources such as the district budget or state aid.

The Foundation is governed by a Board of Directors made up of members of the community working in concert with, but independent of, the Newburyport Public Schools. The Board of Directors is accountable for designating how the funds are to be used. The Foundation’s Board of Directors has endorsed a preliminary goal of $2.1 million during the next three years (2004-2006).
**Why a Private Foundation for Public Education?**

For many years, communities across the nation have been coming to the realization that they must find alternative funding vehicles to support public education if they wish to remain progressive and competitive. (Funding for public education in Massachusetts is further constrained by the limits imposed by Proposition 2 1/2.) It is estimated that more than 4,000 public school foundations have been established in the United States and most of them, including many in Massachusetts, are making a significant difference in their local public school districts.

Most private secondary schools routinely and effectively seek charitable support. While private schools have long understood that tuition is not sufficient to cover all educational costs, public schools are only now realizing that tax allotments—the public school equivalent of tuition—are not sufficient to fund the needs of our public schools. When one takes into account the fact that the per capita student tuition expenditure in the private schools is three to four times greater than the per capita student expenditure in the public schools, the case for bringing philanthropy to the public schools is underscored.

**Why Public Funds Are Never Enough**

The Newburyport Public Schools have an operating budget of approximately $20 million. State aid accounts for no more than approximately 15% of the budget (although the average state contribution for other communities is more than 34%), so the burden of supporting the schools is still overwhelmingly local in Newburyport.

This inequity dates back to the Education Reform Act of 1993, when a per-pupil spending target was set as a goal for all school districts to achieve by the year 2000. If school costs remained stable, this wouldn’t pose a problem. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Escalating special education costs, unfunded state mandates, and the costs of restructuring curriculum and course offerings to match the State frameworks have added to the per-pupil costs in our schools. Because these costs are required by law, they continue to take precedence over the facility improvements and desired programs (such as full-day kindergarten) that have been identified in the school system’s strategic plan as important and desirable to our community.

Although school leaders will continue to work for additional state funding for our schools, it is unlikely that state aid—geared to the “average” school and mandated at the minimum level—will ever fund our schools to achieve the excellence that we would like our community’s children to experience. The Newburyport Education Foundation seeks to develop charitable support which will supplement the publicly funded school budget.

Achieving the goals of the NEF’s three-year campaign will effectively raise annual per pupil expenditures by $290. This relatively small increase will have a major impact on our schools’ ability to realize educators’ goals, provide students with the right facilities, and attract the best teacher candidates to our schools.
**Campaign 2004-2006**

**In Pursuit of Academic Excellence**

While private Foundations for public schools have been quite common in other parts of the country for many years, and are increasingly prevalent in Massachusetts, it wasn’t until 1999 that a group of school officials, alumni, parents, and interested community leaders convened to form the Newburyport Education Foundation.

Over the next two years, the group went through a “start-up” phase that included a number of necessary and prudent steps for a new non-profit organization: recruiting key local leaders, identifying the need, filing articles of incorporation, creating by-laws, and engaging numerous school officials in a dialogue about the purpose, mission, and vision of a Foundation. In addition, there were numerous meetings and conversations with representatives from other public school foundations, surveys and focus groups with teachers and administrators, and discussion as to how funds could best be allocated.

In 2003, with a new Board of directors, the NEF over a period of several months assembled a plan to launch an initial three-year campaign to pursue a quest for excellence in the Newburyport Public Schools. It also enlisted the support of the Newburyport Education Business Coalition (NEBC), whose board members are active in the Public Schools and aware of many urgent needs that fall outside the scope of the NEBC’s mission. Through a collaboration between the NEF and the NEBC, the NEBC hopes to expand its own programs; the NEF expects to build its grant programs on the NEBC’s successful model.

The joint goal of the NEF and the NEBC is to create a single fund raising face to the community in order to maximize the value of contributors’ funds, the positive impact to the identified priorities of the school system, and at the same time reduce the number of requests – or ‘knocks on the door’ for a different reason every day. We have identified three key potential areas for contributions which we will focus on – area businesses that will benefit by employee attraction and retention to a community that has an excellent education system, alumni who have benefited from growing up and being educated through the school system and have developed a pride in being a ‘Clipper’, and from individuals in the community who have the financial wherewithal to improve the quality of education in the community in which they live.

The Board of the NEF and school leaders have interacted collaboratively to determine the current top priorities for the schools as identified by the school administration and teachers and we are confident that the plan reflects the key infrastructure needs of the Newburyport Public Schools over the next 3 years, and that it reflects reasonable, achievable, and meaningful goals. The following pages describe these needs and plans to address them. The estimated cost figures in these pages have been determined by school administrators on an estimated basis.
Upgrade and Renovate Middle School Science Facilities
Amount Needed, 2004–2006: $420,000

To implement a quality science program, a variety of technologies—such as measuring instruments, calculators, and computers for the collection, analysis, and display of data—must be an integral component of student investigations. The right facilities have made a huge difference in the high school science program, long constrained by sub-standard labs. This project will remove those same constraints from the middle school and better allow students to actively engage in analyzing data, develop a richer knowledge base, reason using science concepts, make connections between evidence and explanations, and recognize alternative explanations.

Funding is needed for a complete renovation and re-outfitting of the Middle School science facilities. A design process will begin the renovation portion of the project, followed by gutting the existing labs, rebuilding the interior to maximize instructional space, and adding student access to water, electricity, and technology tools needed during labs. Furnishings, fixtures, and equipment will be updated to support the students’ active inquiry into science topics. All science teachers will be trained to fully utilize the new tools and facilities.

The Science Labs Today
There are eight science labs and a greenhouse at the Middle School that have not changed since they were built in 1972. Although the labs are located appropriately for the team-based structure of the middle school, they are inadequate by today’s standards for science education. In particular, they fail to allow for the integration of technology in science instruction, to support collaborative activities, and to provide the ventilation required for lab activities. The greenhouse’s original flawed design has never been corrected, making it difficult to use this space in any meaningful way. These failings prevent teachers from delivering the lab-based component of the curriculum that would prepare students to continue their learning in the state-of-the-art science facilities at Newburyport High School – which were upgraded during the recent renovation, but have not been fully utilized by students due to limited preparation prior to attending high school. It also negatively affects the school’s ability to attract scarce and in-demand science teachers.

The current labs provide cramped quarters for students who need to work collaboratively on science activities. The fixed lab tables and teacher-oriented layout limit student movement and create safety concerns. Student workstations are simply tables, lacking the sinks and electricity necessary for today’s inquiry-based science investigations. None of the labs provide data ports for computers, calculators, and probes which are integral to the state standards for science education. Limited storage space hampers access to teaching materials and limited display space minimizes the display of student work.

… and Tomorrow
Reconfigured and improved science facilities will be designed to meet the needs of the new science curriculum as well as state standards for technology integration and safety. Their reconfiguration will allow for the inquiry-based and collaborative methods used by
our teachers and called for in the state curriculum frameworks. By meeting these goals, they will allow our teachers to apply the latest methods in science education and to increase student achievement.
Use the High School Distance Learning and Video Production Facilities
Amount Needed, 2004–2006: $160,000

This project would provide the manpower and resources to use the distance learning lab and video production facilities built into the renovated high school. Many smaller high schools like ours are using this technology to expand elective opportunities in a cost-effective way. A dedicated staff person will help other teachers work with and become familiar with how to best utilize this technology, coordinate use of the facilities, and provide a link to the many resources available to our students in this country and around the world. The potential benefit to the high school and its students is tremendous, giving our students access to an expanded curriculum and to the potential to earn college credits while in high school.

Video and Distance Learning Today
With the completion of the distance learning lab and the video production studio, the technology is in place to allow students to take courses on campuses other than NHS. The video production studio is well equipped. The challenge facing the high school is the newness of the technology and the costs associated with using it. Both the distance learning lab and the video production studio require a full-time person devoted to expanding their use, creating the curriculum needed to support students’ learning needs, and supporting teachers who wish to learn to use the new tools.

Course and elective offerings could be expanded in three ways. First, the videoconferencing facility can be used to participate in courses offered at Northern Essex Community College and at other high schools and colleges with similar technology. Students participate via videoconference as if they were in a regular classroom. This capability could also be available for rent to local businesses that need to videoconference with clients or employees in remote locations.

Second, teachers could use distance learning to enhance existing courses by having their students participate in short seminars or interactive sessions offered by colleges, other high schools, and institutions such as NASA.

Third, the video production facility could be used in course work and as a focus for extracurricular work, such as a video journal or productions to be aired via local cable television.

… and Tomorrow
Funds will be used to hire additional personnel and to pay for the telephone and subscription costs associated with distance courses. One new staff person will coordinate use of the video production studio and distance learning lab and work to expand the opportunities for students to use them in many ways. A grant to the schools will help with the cost of long distance calls over ISDN phone lines needed for videoconferencing used in distance courses and the fees associated with most distance learning programs.
Technology Upgrade and Renewal, Grades K-12  
Amount Needed, 2004–2006: $1,170,000

*Because of the dramatic pace at which change occurs in our new “e-World”, staying in the forefront of technological innovation will require a significant, ongoing investment.*

Newburyport has made great progress in bringing modern technology to our schools, although we have by no means met our goals. Sustaining these gains and continuing progress toward today’s technology benchmarks will require more funding than the schools have ever been able to allocate in the annual budget. The current funding formula for public schools now contains no funds for technology acquisition and maintenance, although the suggested allocation for technology proficiency is $350 per pupil. Schools must take funds from other line items or raise outside funds to support educational technology. This project would establish a fund for achieving a goal of five computers per classroom (four student computers and one teacher computer), labs in each building, and replacing technology as it ages.

**Technology in the Schools Today**

In the last two years, the High School has had a major upgrade due to the building project, community support and grants have provided the Middle School with two computer labs, and a federal organization donated two hundred computers to the school system. Despite these gains, the elementary and middle schools remain far behind the high school and short of the technology standard set by the state, which reads, “By the year 2003, every district has achieved at least a 5:1 student-to-computer ratio of modern, fully-functioning, Internet-enabled computers and devices.”

To maintain this standard, the schools need to replace computers on a five-year cycle, upgrade aging equipment and stay current with software. Current funding is not adequate to replace the equipment at any school. In the next 2-3 years, 126 computers will be beyond the five-year age limit at the High School. In four years another 301 computers will be past that limit. The two hundred donated computers are already beyond that limit. The elementary schools use an array of even older computers.

The technology proficiency standard also recommends one technical staff person for every 200 computers. We currently have two on-site technicians responsible for servicing over 800 computers across five buildings. They support 280 teachers and 2,400 students. As computers age, they require additional staff to service them. Keeping our computers current will allow for more use with less intervention and help to keep staff levels down.

*… and Tomorrow*

This project, in concert with the schools’ budgeted funds, would bring technology expenditures in Newburyport to a more realistic level. The first phase of the project would purchase enough computers, software, and peripherals to upgrade the elementary and middle school facilities to the standard (four computers and one teacher station per classroom), and to provide labs in each building. The second phase of the project would
apply $280,000 annually to renew and upgrade computer equipment at all levels to help the schools maintain the ratio of students to modern computers.
Bridges Between Education and Business
Amount Needed, 2004–2006: $100,000

In 1990, Newburyport educators and business leaders responded to the Grace Commission’s call for schools to better prepare students with the skills needed for future employment. They formed the Newburyport Education Business Coalition (NEBC), a non-profit organization committed to establishing meaningful, curriculum-based connections between the Newburyport Public Schools and the world of work. Not designed as a fundraising organization, the NEBC has nonetheless served as a de facto education foundation, raising funds to support programs that enrich and enhance the Public Schools. At the same time, the NEBC has restricted its support to education/business partnerships and been unable to support many worthwhile projects outside its mission. This project brings the NEF and NEBC together in an alliance that will allow the NEF to build on NEBC program models, and allow the NEBC to focus more on the person-to-person matching essential to building meaningful bridges between educators, students, and business people.

Funding is needed to meet increasing demand for NEBC Partnership and Sense of Place grants, to replace state and federal funding that once supported transportation to career-related programs, and to allow for growth of new programs such as teacher externships, technology club, and more. Although NEBC members and educators volunteer their time, defraying the costs of materials, equipment, and field trips are essential to making these projects possible.

The NEBC Today
One of the first organizations of its kind in New England, the NEBC has become a recognized leader in school-business partnerships. The NEBC’s membership has grown from a handful of dedicated individuals to an ever-expanding mix of educators and business people in the greater Newburyport area. Today, the NEBC supports programs at every grade level that make the link between what students are learning and how that knowledge is applied in the world of work, including:

- Partnership Grants
- A Sense of Place Grants
- Internships
- Externships
- Port Day
- Job Shadow Day
- Career Fair
- Career Expo
- Jazz Festival
- Book Bag
- Technology Club

… and Tomorrow
Donations to the NEBC will add to revenue raised through membership dues to allow these programs to continue—and to grow in step with growing interest in these partnerships.
Community-Based Education
Amount Needed, 2004–2006: $140,000

The Newburyport community is blessed with a wealth of resources, and the Public Schools have integrated many of them into the school system’s curriculum. Science and social studies teachers in particular use these resources to enrich the learning environment. Sites within the community and local environment become the “classroom” where local experts share their knowledge and skills. Parents and community volunteers make fieldwork and hands-on projects feasible, but transportation costs have become a barrier. This project will make it easier for teachers to bring students into the “community classroom” so locations such as the Parker River Wildlife Refuge, Maudslay State Park, the Industrial Park, and the Merrimac River can be used as learning resources.

Education in the Community Today
Portions of our science and social studies curricula are directly related to resources within the Newburyport community. Many other curriculum areas also link to architectural, business, and arts resources in our community. Experiencing “real life” applications and relating the familiar to what is being learned are very powerful learning tools for students. The schools also support projects that allow students to make a difference through community service as they relate those experiences to their learning.

Transportation for students is a major factor in accessing these community resources. However the cost and inflexible nature of contracted transportation is a major stumbling block.

... and Tomorrow
Renting school buses to provide field trip transportation is quite expensive and inefficient. Twelve-passenger vans, which can be driven by school personnel, will enable ready and more flexible access to community resources. This project would allow for the purchase of four twelve-passenger vans over three years.
**Annual Support: Unrestricted**
Amount Needed, 2004–2006: $200,000

As a new organization, it is even more important that part of the Newburyport Education Foundation’s continuing efforts be to develop annual support from its constituencies, even while seeking support for the major capital initiatives identified above.

Throughout the year, smaller gifts or pledges may be made in response to other Foundation initiatives such as mailings, commemorative giving and some of our fundraising events.

Remembering that the traditional sources of funds for our public schools are limited, annual charitable support from our constituents can help to create the margin of excellence that we hope to develop and sustain in order to provide the highest quality education for our public school students.

**Building an Endowment**
Gifts of endowment through the Newburyport Education Fund will generate income to help meet the needs of our school buildings in the years ahead. Endowment gifts will be carefully invested. Unless otherwise specified by the donor, a portion of the earnings will be distributed annually in accordance with donor restrictions to meet the priority needs of the Newburyport Public Schools; the remaining portion will be reinvested. The original charitable gifts committed to endowment—the fund’s principal—will remain intact and invested in perpetuity. While unrestricted endowed funds provide Newburyport Public Schools with the greatest flexibility, individuals who have specific interests are encouraged to direct their gifts accordingly.
Your Opportunity to Invest and Make a Difference
Gifts to the Newburyport Education Fund will help meet the needs of the public schools in the years ahead. There will be opportunities to contribute on many levels, including an annual giving campaign, capital campaign, and planned giving. Income from permanent endowed gift funds can be designated for a particular need or left unrestricted to be invested by The Board of Directors. Naming opportunities also exist to name a school facility, such as the high school library, in memory of loved ones or events.

Education requires experiences that can help students to look beyond the years they spend in school to the roles they can play in the future. They are becoming the citizens who will lead, perform, build and create the world ahead of us. We seek, with help from others, to make them the best-educated and most conscientious members of society that we have ever known. The Newburyport Education Foundation offers donors meaningful, lasting opportunities to support excellence in public education in our city.
### Addendum: Project Budget Estimates

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**Total** $420,000
Distance Learning and Video Production

Because this is a new technology, the following timeline shows how the school plans to grow into the various elements of a comprehensive program.

**Spring 2004**
- Video Production Club offered as an activity: $1,000
- Elective Course offered through NECCO via Distance Learning: $1,500
- On-line Course offered through NECCO: $1,500
- Video Production course taught by current instructor: no cost
- Professional Development collaboration with neighboring schools: $300-500
- Total: $4,500

**School Year 2004-2005**
- 2-3 Elective Courses offered to students through NECCO & neighboring schools via Distance Learning: $2,000
- 2-3 Elective Courses offered to students through NECCO via on-line technology: student paid
- Hire Video Production/Distance Learning Coordinator. Would teach Video Production course, run video production club, and would supervise on-line and distance learning classes. Would expand electives offered through distance learning and would coordinate distant learning resources for faculty and area businesses: $50,000
- Monies available for Distance Learning phone costs and course offerings: $10,000
- Total: $62,000

**School Year 2005-2006**
- Budgets in each department to include line item for desired Distance Learning programs: $28,000
- Video Production/Distance Learning Coordinator to expand video production into collaborative efforts with local cable to provide exposure for athletics, drama, student performances and student productions: $50,000
- Electives, paid for by students, offered through Distance Learning and on-line media in collaboration with NECCO and area high schools. Budget for phone usage determined by cost history from 2004-2005 school year (TBD): $10,000
- Consideration of offering additional electives (TBD): 5,500
- Total: $93,500

**Technology Upgrade and Renewal**
- 2004: $610,000
- 2005: $280,000
- 2006: $280,000

**Bridges Between Education and Business**
- 2004: $25,000
- 2005: $35,000
- 2006: $40,000

**Community-Based Education**
- 2004: $35,000
- 2005: $70,000
- 2006: $35,000