



Newburyport
Education
Foundation

CAMPAIGN **NEF**
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MOLIN-NOCK LEARNING COMMON

The Molin-Nock Learning Common will be a space that ignites student creativity, curiosity, discovery, and literacy through the use of innovative technology and high-impact, collaborative spatial design.

Transforming the Molin/Nock Library to a Learning Common

A network where learners connect and knowledge is constructed!

Project Overview

The Newburyport Education Foundation is raising funds to transform the library used by the Molin Elementary School (grades 4–5) and the Nock Middle School (grades 6–8). Although the library received new carpeting and new windows from the recent renovation project last year, the space was essentially unchanged. This project would reconfigure the space, purchase new furniture and technology, and transform the library into a learning center on par with the new Bresnahan School library and the recently renovated IFS Library and Media Center at the High School.

The goal of the transformation is to create a learning common that will:

- Encourage a joy of reading
- Allow for student research to build understanding using innovative technology
- Provide collaborative work space for project-based learning
- Build a shared learning community
- Serve as the hub of information sharing



Rationale

Today's school libraries are not hushed environments for silent reading—they are a hub for information sharing, presentations, and project-based research used by individual students as well as classes who choose to meet there. They provide technology to access, share, and present information. They encourage students to read—and to talk about the books they read. They are often called “Learning Commons” to better reflect their central role and shared use among all learners and teachers. They are key to generating excitement around reading, learning, and discovery.

In learning commons of the future, students create, design, present, and experience.

Spaces shape and change practice. Engaging, adaptable spaces energize students, teachers, and the community. Well-designed learning spaces inspire creative, productive, and efficient learning.

The current library has a 70s design more suited to silent reading than the technology- and project-based learning common today. Although large enough for multiple groups, it is not well-suited to more than 30 students using the space at once. Classes using the computers situated right next to the doorway are distracted by other students coming and going. There are no quiet reading spaces, no outlets for recharging technology, and no dedicated presentation space.

A survey of teachers and students revealed that the space needed to better support individuals, small groups, and whole classes using the space at the same time. The proposed redesign creates four class-sized areas using modular components that can be moved and reshaped to fit the group and the activity. The computers will be moved into a new, less-distracting location that makes better use of existing space. There will be areas to support independent work and individual reading, plus a raised multi-purpose platform area for performances, author readings, guest speakers, and more.

The reconfigured space will have the flexibility to support research, instructional space, class projects, book clubs, tutoring, independent reading, author visits, summer reading, book fairs, and staff meetings. In addition, the space will accommodate additional school district events such as PTO meetings, Open Houses, Parent Night events, or professional development.

In learning commons of the future, students collaborate outside rows and desks.

“Change the furniture to more modern pieces that are colorful ... a big round couch for you to read and relax ... nice chairs to read and do homework in ... comfy furniture and a board with book recommendations” — from the student survey

A big part of transforming the library is the furniture and shelving. The hard chairs and tables purchased in the 70s for the then-new library do not provide a comfortable learning environment. The new learning common will feature a variety of chairs and tables to fit the many ways that space will be used. Booths for small groups, cozy nooks for reading, high-top table and chairs, and more—all in colorful, inviting hues. A variety of shelving will help students see and find books more easily, and will also serve as modular units that can be used to divide up the space.

In learning commons of the future, students use technology to participate.

“A place to use my laptop, tablet, or iPad ... a bigger free read section that you can also use laptops in ... more iPad readers” — from the student survey

The technology and meeting resources in the current library are minimal and do not support more than 30 students using the space at once. There is an overhead projector used primarily by adults, but no large-screen display. The goal of transforming the library includes better integration of technology tools. In addition to reconfiguring the computers into a class-sized space, the learning common will add new digital displays for instruction, presentations, skyping with authors. or displaying student work. An interactive whiteboard will add capabilities for presenting and sharing. Students and teachers will find places to charge their electronic devices. Replacement books, eBooks, iPad apps, fiction, and non-fiction are also part of the tranformation.

In learning commons of the future, students become independent thinkers.

Over half of the teachers surveyed said their ideal use for the library was for project-based learning. 85% want students to do research there. 70% want space to showcase student work. 43% plan to do whole-class instruction there.

The Molin/Nock Library currently serves 1,000 patrons weekly and 2,150 books are checked in and out each month. Checking out books and research are the top uses. Transforming the space will also empower teachers and students to use the space in new ways—especially ways aligned with the project-based and collaborative learning so important today. From the survey, we know that Molin/Nock students want to use the library more during their flex time and after school. Since its transformation, the High School Library and Media Center has seen more than a 200% increase in student use, plus more intensive use by teachers for class projects, and the same can be expected at the Molin/Nock.

Project Components and Costs

The project components have been prioritized into Tier 1 and Tier 2. Tier 2 items may be added if funds allow or in a future phase of the project. A more detailed line-item listing of the project costs is available in addition to this summary.

Component	Tier 1	Tier 2
Space Redesign & Signage	\$38,890	\$42,690
Furniture	\$109,500	\$120,125
Technology	\$14,130	\$16,400
Books/Media Resources	\$5,000	\$8,000
Total	\$167,520	\$187,215