Join the Community Conversation About the Future of Education in Newmarket

Saturday, November 8th
8:30 a.m.–Doors Open
9:00 to Noon–Program
Newmarket Junior/Senior High School

Refreshments and onsite child care provided

To register, visit: www.newmarketcommonground.org or call (603) 862-0692.

Hosted by Newmarket Common Ground
WHAT DO WE VALUE?
THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION FOR NEWMARKET

A community conversation
hosted by
Newmarket Common Ground

Newmarket Junior/Senior High School
November 8, 2014

With support from New Hampshire Listens
www.nhlistens.org
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Here is the general outline of our time:

8:30  Registration
9:00  Welcome and purpose
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11:40 Small group summary reports
11:55 Next steps
12:00 Closing

What is New Hampshire Listens?
New Hampshire Listens is a civic engagement initiative of the Carsey School of Public Policy at the University of New Hampshire. NH Listens works to strengthen New Hampshire communities by helping citizens participate directly in discussions about policies that affect their daily lives. Established in 2011, we engage state residents in local, regional, and statewide conversations on a broad range of topics to bring about informed, innovative solutions to complex issues. At the core of our work, we organize fair, nonpartisan discussions throughout the state, help communities establish their own local Listens organizations, and train facilitators for public engagement. If you are interested in more information, we look forward to you being in touch with us. We are always looking for thoughtful facilitators and local contacts in NH communities. Find us at: [www.NHListens.org](http://www.NHListens.org)

This guide is the same for all participants and facilitators. The facilitators will help guide the conversation but we are all responsible for making sure the group is productive. Thank you!
Welcome and thank you for joining today’s conversation ~

We look forward to your questions, concerns, ideas, and hopes regarding the future of Newmarket’s schools. Today is one part of a process to get input from the residents of Newmarket that can help to inform elected and appointed public officials, including the School Board, Town Council, Superintendent’s office, and others who are concerned about making informed choices for Newmarket’s education system. We will take the time to get informed together and then hear the priorities you believe are important as the town makes decisions that impact, represent, and affect us all.

Today’s conversation will bring Newmarket residents together for an in-depth discussion about how best to move forward in light of the divisions that surfaced during the March, 2014 town vote on funding for a new high school. Newmarket Common Ground will gather a range of views and recommendations that can be presented to the School Board and Town Council as those elected bodies determine how best to address the educational facility needs of current and future students.

Newmarket Common Ground takes no advocacy position on the best way to move forward; it is simply committed to fostering civil and constructive dialogue that enables all voices to be heard and that can generate creative ideas consistent with the values and circumstances of the community.

Detailed Outline

8:30  Registration and Refreshments

- Welcome and sign in at registration table
- Please find your small group circle to meet your facilitator and fellow participants. Please take a few minutes to review the background information starting on page 7.

Please note: We are delighted to have this event covered by the press and local bloggers and want to balance that with a participant’s ability to express an incomplete or experimental thought as a part of this process. We respectfully request that all representatives of the news media (formal and informal) identify themselves at the registration table and ask permission to tape, photograph, identify, or quote an individual participant directly. We are happy to answer any questions about this request.

9:00  Welcome and Overview of the Conversation

- Welcome from Newmarket Common Ground
- NH Listens Moderator: Bruce Mallory

*The goal of this conversation is to get informed together and to share our feedback and priorities for the future of Newmarket’s public schools. A summary report will be created from all small group discussions and shared with participants, the School Board, Superintendent, Town Council, and the general public.*

- About the process: This conversation is--
  - Designed to focus on what is important to you related to the future of Newmarket’s public schools. Our purpose is to support the hard work of our School Board and school leaders as they make difficult choices.
• Designed for participants to be here the whole time (do what you need to do to be most present: Feel free to take a break or step outside for a phone call if needed).
• About a constructive focus and looking forward to desired actions and solutions.
• Intended to increase input and information on complex decisions being made by our community leaders.
• Organized to allow the greatest possible time for everyone to both speak and listen, which is why we use small facilitated groups where ideas can be explored, differences understood, and preferences for action expressed.

➤ Group agreements for a productive conversation;
  • Share air time
  • If you disagree, consider asking a question rather than arguing to prove your point
  • It’s OK to disagree, but don’t personalize it. Stick to the issue, not the person who is disagreeing with you
  • Speak up if the process doesn’t seem fair
  • Speak for yourself, not for others and not for an entire group (use “I” statements)
  • Personal stories stay in the group unless we all agree we can share them outside of the group
  • We all share responsibility for making the group productive
  • Be respectful and use respectful language
  • Respect the facilitator’s role
  • Listen first.

9:15  Introductions in small groups

➤ Your small group has a neutral facilitator whose role is to:
  • Help with the process and keep time,
  • Serve as a reminder of our agreements to be fair and respectful,
  • Make sure everyone gets a chance to participate, and
  • Record key information for the Summary Report

➤ Reminder: Your group will need someone to report out to the large group at the end.

➤ Introductions: Please share your:
  • Name,
  • A hat or two you wear in the Newmarket community, and how you are connected to the topic of Newmarket’s schools, and
  • One thing you love about living in Newmarket...

9:30  Community Values

➤ Discussion prompts

  • What do you value most about the Newmarket community?
  • What do you think are the greatest threats to those values?
  • What role should Newmarket’s schools play in supporting the values that are important to you?
10:00 **Information Review**

Take the time to look over the information section related to Newmarket schools and students. For our purposes, we will be asking you “what do you notice?” or “what is most important to you about this information?”

Take a few minutes to read and ask clarifying questions.

**Brainstorm:** To get started, spend time getting the most important issues on the table. Don’t worry about the details at this point, just make sure the primary issues have been named. Again, what do you notice and what is important to you regarding Newmarket schools and students? What are the key topics you hope to discuss this morning?

10:15 **Key Questions and Priorities**

Consider the framing question: *What Do We Value? The Future of Education for Newmarket*

Spend some time discussing the key issues and their importance to you. Keep in mind the values and information you have just been discussing.

It might be useful for each person to speak briefly about their perspective and key questions. The following questions may be helpful to prompt your thinking (but you will likely not have time to address each one individually):

- What are the most important ingredients of a quality small elementary, middle, or high school?
- How can the curriculum support optimal learning for our students?
- How can school facilities support optimal learning for our students?
- What role could technology play in future schools, and how would that affect the curriculum and facilities that will be needed?
- What criteria should the School Board and Town Council use as they decide next steps for Newmarket’s schools?

Spend time here exploring differences and commonalities in your group. What questions remain? Has anyone gained insights or new understandings? Any new ideas to note?

11:20 **Final Priorities**

Based on your group conversation, “Are there any common-ground thoughts or ideas in this group? If so, what do we want to say at the end of the evening? If not, what diverse points of view do we want to convey?”

A single consensus is not required, but if one emerges, or perhaps if the group wants to put forward two or three primary points of view, that is fine. These will represent your **key recommendations or findings.**
Your group will need to prioritize its top insights and/or recommendations to report out to the large group and select someone to speak. The reporting out should include no more than two or three specific statements. To arrive at this point, the group should take a step back and look for both the unique ideas and those that seemed to recur. Group ideas together that seem to be related, but don’t lose track of the unique ones.

The written small group report will convey a more complete view of your group’s ideas for the final report (this will be taken directly from the flip chart notes and will be included directly in the report as finalized by your group). You will likely not have time to represent all of your ideas in the large group report out (two minutes!).

11:40  Reporting Out

Each group will be asked to provide a VERY BRIEF summary of their most important findings, concerns or recommendations. If you are asked to speak for your group, please be brief and share what has been compiled by your group, including common ground and divergent views. (You will have two minutes!)

11:55  Wrap up comments

- Please fill out the evaluation – it matters to us! We read these and always work to incorporate your feedback. Thank you!
- Next steps

12:00  Closing

Thank you for participating!
Background Information

Demographics

Newmarket Population Change 1970-2010

Population By Age Group as of 2010

Source: New Hampshire Department of Employment Security
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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Newmarket</th>
<th>Statewide</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Per Capita Income</strong></td>
<td>$32,032</td>
<td>$32,758</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Median Household Income</strong></td>
<td>$60,398</td>
<td>$64,925</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Individuals Below the Poverty Line</strong></td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Unemployment rate</strong></td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Median Age</strong></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>41.9</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>High School Graduate or Higher</strong></td>
<td>93.9%</td>
<td>91.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bachelor’s Degree or Higher</strong></td>
<td>41.1%</td>
<td>32.0%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

All data from 2012

Source: New Hampshire Department of Education and US Census Data

**Employment**

### 2012 Average Employment By Industry

![Chart showing average employment by industry](chart.png)

Source: New Hampshire Department of Employment Security

Compiled by New Hampshire Listens for Newmarket Common Ground
www.NHListens.org
School Enrollment

School Enrollment by District

High School Enrollment

Source: New Hampshire Department of Education

Compiled by New Hampshire Listens for Newmarket Common Ground
www.NHListens.org
Newmarket Enrollment By Grade 2013-2014

Source: New Hampshire Department of Education

Compiled by New Hampshire Listens for Newmarket Common Ground
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Teacher Data

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<th>Teachers</th>
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<td>Instructional Support</td>
<td>88</td>
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<tr>
<td>Librarians</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specialists</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Support</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other Support</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teacher Education Level

- Master's Degree: 46%
- Bachelor's Degree: 54%

Source: New Hampshire Department of Education
Student Achievement

2013-2014 NECAP Reading Test Scores

2013-2014 NECAP Mathematics Test Scores

Source: New Hampshire Department of Education

Compiled by New Hampshire Listens for Newmarket Common Ground
www.NHLListens.org
2013-2014 NECAP Writing Test Scores

Source: New Hampshire Department of Education

Compiled by New Hampshire Listens for Newmarket Common Ground
www.NHListens.org
Appendix C: All Small Group Notes

Group A: Quixada and Casey
Value/Worry/Threat
Community Values: School/Concerns
- Tight knit community
- State/fed mandates detracting from the quality of education
- Loss of community and self-direction due to out-sourcing – school in different town
- What would Newmarket look like without the school? – Impact on the community/economy
- Other schools offer a larger class section and extra-curricular
- Loss of decision making power or no say because of involvement/reliance on other towns

Community Values: Threats/Values
- Individual attention paid to students – lost in a larger school – less risk of adolescent issues being ignored/missed (bullying/drugs)
- Talking to graduates to see what they valued and what suggestions they could make – did they feel prepared with college/?society/?job prep?
- Being competitive with other schools in the area prepares our kids adequately – preparing local but national context?
- Making sure that our students are treated equally (lately as less) in a cooperative school district (pride in being Newmarket and sense of community – potential to lose this.)
- Cooperative sports teams can be used in place of merging school districts
  - College prep and college courses

Information Review: Important points, things noticed
- Falling enrollment across the board (from elementary to jr/sr schools)
- No comparison to stat data – is it a state wide trend or unique to Newmarket?
- Amount of college grads in Newmarket
- High school graduation rate, higher than state average
- Are the science testing results a trend, or just the results from a single
- How do these results (testing) compare nationally
- Have to be careful with data analysis/interpretation
- Different resources in two science classrooms
- Lack of teachers and resources impacting science grades/testing results
- Why can’t we focus on science in Newmarket, STEM in general
- What are the trends for testing in Newmarket? (science)

Key Priorities and Values
- How much do we value financially our education system
- Constricting choices based off the actions of other towns
- Long term financial impacts
- Want ar more in depth evaluation of options/data from school district
Would a better school facility increase the value of the town?
School board provide more information to avoid interpretation
What criteria do we want to pass forward from town council/school board?
More specific and accessible information on issues
Look first at what is best for the towns children, then financial
State law on board
Communication to town and school board – dig deeper into (??) make clear

Criteria

- Clear potential plans, multiple scenarios and potential results, for future action
- Vote not on the price tag, but the best thing for the kids and the community
- Most viable long term solution – not a quick fix
- Provide in specific and accessible handouts
- Take into account for an effective long term plan
- Can outside tuition be a sustainable long term solution?
- How long will the building take?
- How will it impact the town economy, population
- Will there be state aid? To help the process – how can this be obtained?
- Adapt to and use advanced teaching tech – school, math, labs
- Making facilities than can use technology – exploring the possibilities of using tech
- Being cautious when investing in/taking chances with new technology
- Taking into account the loss of jobs (teachers) that would occur if we tuitioned out and impacts – school culture and morale effect
- Curriculum is okay, don’t make crucial decisions based on current facilities
- Facilities need to fit intended programming, not vice versa
- If build new school, tie in tech to get state and tech related funds
- Consider having students tuitioned here - to help cover the costs
- New cooperative school district (Nottingham, Lee, Epping)
- Consider building a facility ex. Auditorium that can be rented out for revenue – also attraction for new students
- Design the school to be an income generator

Final priorities

- Outside of having a potentially larger curriculum, there were only negatives to be said about tuitioning out students (would it result in a true savings?)
- Town impact
- School culture impacts
- Decision making
- Having accessible and specific information to about potential plans for the future of the school and thinking long term consequences on the town.
- Don’t want the decisions made to negatively impact the community of the town and positivity
• To harm/undo all of the work that has been done to make Newmarket what it is today
• So much work/time/money has been invested in developing the town, why not invest the same into the school or town in general.

Group B: Sue
Heart
• Less expensive place to live
• Diamond in the rough/gem of the seacoast
• Potential
• Sense of community – special
• Small charming downtown
• Diverse population
• Unh close proximity – benefits, students are a part of community
• Town is on the move people are coming, mills
• Great bay, Lamprey river (location)
• Population growing
• Isolated/off the beaten path

What do you value most about the community?
• Diversity
• Community feel
• Unpretentious
• Small town feel
• Not “big box” business
• Contained downtown
• People know each other
• Kids have great friends
• Community supports/values kids
• Clean, safe, healthy, community involvement
• Safe – physical, involved, open, welcome, safe to express opinions, supportive, feel heard here
• Small school/population
• People know each other
• Sense of ownership
• Small pond
• Consistency
• Stability
• Deep roots (some families have been here for over 300 years)
• Range of intimacy
• Non discrimination
• Accountability because we know each other
• Personal space
Great Threats/School Rode
- Losing the intimacy
- School serves as a focal point for center of values
- What are you going to do? –destabilizing, instability
  - re: school parents/kids
- Shallow understanding of the school/issues
- Investing in the facility
- Cultivate the sense of community in school
- Kids competing in global economy
- Building is a perceived barrier/threat
- We are being defined by the facility issue
- Lack of foresight
- Small contained community has to decide what to invest in long term/big picture
- Seeing school as an investment
- School is the core of town – teaches community. Worth the risk
- Seen as a “static” cost
- Seeing the school as core is not accurate
- School should support the values but are not the center of those values
- School keeps the community intact and intimate
- Trust

Key Topics
- Population/demographic have D
- Letting go of jr/sr high would be loss of a legacy
- Long term view in planning
- Critical decisions will shape our future
- School is part of a larger investment
- Must plan/band-aide decisions

Key Questions/Priority
- Quality of school
- Want a permanent solution
- School population drop from 5th to 6th grades
- Quality of our education
- Lack of opportunity for students
- Attract and retain good teachers
- Understand why people move here, stay, and leave
- Ask people/families are leaving and document it
- Investing in technology kids can use
- Invest in science classrooms (Bunsen burners)
• Music and arts facilities for elementary junior and senior schools
• Resources
• Extracurricular activities after school
• STEAM

What is 21st Century Ed?
• Make purposeful changes and investments
• VLACS – Kahn Academy
• Longer school year (make it longer)
• Accountability (teachers, students, parents) – mutual accountability
• Homework club
• Support all students
• Challenge all students
• What are we responsible for (in educating children?)
• Our responsibility as a community is to provide a safe place where students learn
• Parents responsibility – to make sure kids are ready for school/learning
• School needs to build on that to make sure kids meet education standards are are prepared
• What you value you pay for
• What is the necessary investment as a community
• Small class size
• Better student/teacher ratio
• Access to technology
• Research about what is optimal
• Foster trust for leaders/decision makers
• Transparency
• Broaden the explanation of “value”

Love/Value
• Potential
• Diversity

Threats:
• Trust

Needs:
• Facility improvement
• Technology
• Science
• Art and music
• Incest in teachers
• Role of parents
• *what are you going to do*
Key Questions

- Quality of education
- Long term plan is necessary – 20 year vision
- Short term – next five years

Group C: Cara

Values: (what people value most)

- Small community – there are little groups that intertwine to form a larger unit
- Everybody knows one another, small town feel. The actual downtown is important
- There is no “keeping up with the Jones” attitude, people have good values.
- It is a safe place – people take care of one another, neighbors help neighbors
- Kids of all ages are inclusive 0 elementary school offers activities that offer several grades – it allows different age groups to interact.
- There are a lot of small, great businesses – incubator opportunities and innovative people
- Fantastic rec department
- Very children oriented town
- There is high social capital in Newmarket
- Community supports one another from small children up through the elderly
- Diverse community – inclusive
- Teachers in Newmarket offer a lot of after school opportunities (volunteered)
- Music arts and culture
- Active and fit community
- Size of schools – kids are known, not just a number
- It is beautiful!

Values (threat)

- Neglect (think broad lens)
- Perceived or actual division
- Heroin (issue in NH)
- Facebook (not a good venue to work out sensitive issues)
- Anonymity
- State rep – noticed that of her four towns that Newmarket is the most politically diverse (us vs them)
- Distrust – misunderstanding, vilification of the views of others
- Self-interest vs community interest – can be a problem,
- Tuitioning out (the group agrees) – losing the ability to be educated in your town
- The children are good at volunteering in their community
- If kids go to school elsewhere... it is a threat to relationships (ex. Right now sports teams go to have a mean in town, tuition out= lose that.)
- Transient population (kids moving in and out can be hard for those kids)
- There are pros and cons to transient population
• Some ownership in terms of commitment to community – don’t make the same investment to the town
• Can offer different perspective on the town – not being open to listen can be a threat
• It can also be an opportunity
• Need a way to bring old and new together
• Not addressing the school issue is a threat

Important
• Students do outreach in the community; they give back
• School providing quality education
• Social capital built around school functions
• Schools helps build community
• Being able to keep finger on the pulse of my children’s world
• Newmarket is part of the seacoast school of technology- if new market goes to oyster river = lose.
• Special ed. program is amazing
• Bust must also make sure that higher achieving students needs are met (enrichment programs)
• Newmarket has a high percentage of kids that go to SST.
• The big connector (the meeting house) – opportunity to create a special niche
• Good schools = tend to be more economically viable invest in

Key Questions and Priorities
In response to graphs
• Good reputation for elementary schools
• Some parents pull their kids out into private school for middle and high schools
• Losing teachers – they are lowest paid – concerned about losing jobs if the town petitions out, some are looking now.

Criteria
• Long term sustainable plan
• Stop patchwork fixes
• Wide view, related to culture and community
• Quality, not just doing the minimum
• Want a Newmarket school system
• Want school here!
• Do not defer school maintenance – must maintain consistency
• School board is looking 20 years out
• We need a school that the town can afford, must consider cost
• Cooperative (you have a say) vs tuition (no say) vs own school (have say, stay in community)
• Be open-minded to alternative solutions
• Create value that other towns would want to buy into
• Need to create curriculum that points towards todays innovative opportunities (STEM)
• Consider “outside of the box” funding
• How do you draw people from the community into the school – what can we offer/provide to this group?
• Get people who do not have students in the school involved
• What about having a magnet school that has a focus on math/science?
• Conundrum – need new school to be to access grants, etc.
• Better coordinated effort on potential funding sources, it not usual suspects like state funding. – committee for external funding
• Don’t want to lose quality educations for facility
• Recognition that Newmarket is on a tight rope/downward spiral
• How do we create consensus in community around the value in education
  - Maybe if Newmarket creates something unique it might bring people together – what’s in it for them?
  - Need to know the facts around the school system, why do we need to build a new school? Show me.

Facility – if you build it, they will come
• New labs
• Old building is like the old beater car that we keep putting money into, would it be better spent on a new building
• Do not want high property taxes without feeling like your child can be educated in newmarket
• Auditorium (a space the community can use – can be a revenue generator
• Do not want space/quality of interfere with elective options
• People want a Honda Civic not a Cadillac
• What about a phase approach (for palatability)

Curriculum
• Honors/AP Courses
• Want quality education around the basics (reading, writing, math)
• The school could integrate/partner more with the downtown existing structures.

Last Burning Thoughts
• Can Nottingham or other surrounding towns like Barrington tuition with Newmarket
• Why is this not being looked at/ considered more?
• An opportunity- consider a couple towns collaborating/making a cooperative new school together
• Right now a lot of energy is being spent on exploring whether Newmarket should tuition out to Epping or Dover and the feeling is that this idea will likely get voted down and therefore it would be a good idea to have some fort of town vote on this issue to limit the amount of time expended on this idea.
Final Priorities:
1. Discuss the facts (verifiable info) to be able to make an educated decision and get the necessary buy-in to build a new school.
2. Small community, want to keep out students here in Newmarket – want to see less talk about tuitioning out and more about how to keep the schools in Newmarket.
3. Avoid us vs them divisiveness – take back the community as a whole. Nature good-will/good-faith and cooperation.
4. Have more access to 21st century education – stem and sst.
5. Prefer cost-effective long term solution where the school stays in town so we can continue to invest in ourselves (cost offset by outside funding, explore tuition options or co-ops).

Group D – Sara
Values
- Livability
- Community feel
- Diversity
- Close community
- Character
- Affordability
- History
- Vibrant downtown
- Education
- Solution focused
- Neighbors like family
- Families reinvesting in town/community
- Small town feel

Threats
- “Change is hard”
- Conversations should inform solutions (not other way around)
- Decision
- One side not hearing what the other side is saying
- School/town divide e.g. budget, communication
- No longer issue-based
- Ignorance/stereotypes
- Misinformation – especially around regulations/requirements
- Lack of clarity
- Nasty personalized Facebook – not face to face
- Is a vocal small group reflective of major mistrust of information provided
- Class-clashing, ignorance because of busy lives
- Fast flow of decision making
- Not trusted, centralized info hub
- Speed of info low trust of school decision makers “all or nothing mentality”
- Lack of compromise
Questions

- How to involve residents not directly involved in school?
- How can conversations drive solutions not the other way around?
- Do we want to grow as a town?

Information Review

- Enrollment - how to get an accurate estimate?
- School population – what is going to happen with enrollment/property development (e.g. boom of apartments in 80's = enrollment bump
- Conversation re: building regulation (e.g., moratoriums, school unit fees, etc.)
- Would a new school improve educational outcomes?
- Science and math scores could improve, how does this relate to facility? Science and tech may depend more on facility.

Priorities

- Communicating with parents on curriculum
- Use curriculum as foundation for choice re: space preserving
- Teacher dedication to students
- Appreciate complexity of issue – listen first
- Ask teachers – involve them in conversation and understand why so many love this job. Staff know.

Key Questions

- Can we plan for flexible school building space? E.g. pods, remote learning
- How best to preserve sense of community?
- How to preserve quality of education and be mindful of cost?
- Clarify coop vs tuition agreements
- What are long-term unintended costs?
- What are the curriculum pieces in science and teach that have implications re: facility?
- Education is not static – how to plan for that re: building choices
- Tech is a value – how to budget today for innovations tomorrow?
- Needs – what state says, what kids/teachers need?
- How to reach agreement on needs/projections?
- School isn’t all out tax money goes to – are we risking other services? Can we preserve teacher pay?
- Most important ingredients - communication with parents, teacher quality, curriculum as blueprint for decision making, keep transparency re: decision making especially class size
- Curriculum supports learning – have to make choices that balance class size/learning opportunities. Different students need a different approach
- Facilities – flexibility of boom/bust – elevator question
- Role of teach – larger districts may offer more teach opportunities but how to balance with community values/small class size? virtual classrooms present new opportunity
• Criteria to consider
  - Teacher input – not a wish list but what you need to further teach the curriculum?
  - Is there a review process in place to explore impact of class size, online learning opportunities
  - What do we really need? Trist creative flexibility of school, teacher
  - Create info hub

Priorities
  - Differentiate wants/needs/requirements
  - Flexibility (of space to accommodate enrollment trends etc)
  - Clear info hub and next steps
  - Communicate transparently info and context
  - Retain talented teachers – seek out input
  - Explore space between requirements and wants/needs
  - Update: where we are now as existing school
  - Communication at town wide level
  - Communication plan – multiple platforms/centralized info
  - Strong leadership at superintendent level
  - Do we have a plan to include students of all abilities?
  - Balance school with other town projections
  - Conversations need to drive solutions and we need more conversation!

Group E – Leslie
Values:
  • Small town feel
  • History
  • Diversity
  • Community involvement
  • Aesthetically pleasing downtown – friendly for foot traffic
  • Preserve character will development occurs
  • Quality education (kids have gotten lost in the discussion
  • Keeping the teachers
  • Bay (physical environment – seacoast area
  • Conservation land/open space
  • Class size – all students know each other
  • Community pride
  • Learned as a community how to invest in ourselves
  • Limitation – finding a way to come together and find consensus to move schools forward
  • Location – great access to seacoast good commuter location

Role schools should play to support values
  • Division regarding school “issues’ need to move and stay in past. Town needs to move forward with school issues in a productive manner.
  • How do you fix the hard feelings created through history of town/school/politics
  • Confrontational past keeps new valuable people coming forward to help
• Social media threads can be very toxic and are very public
• Group conversations need to continue, adding all sections of the community
• Community needs to be able to agree to disagree. Need to stop personalizing and attacking differing points of view
• Fear of higher taxes
• Everyone agrees – need great schools but need affordable taxes
• Problem – how do we achieve both?
• Small town with city type challenged – store water EPA mandates…
• Have to have skin in the same to have interest in end result
• Diversity of social interests in community
• Need to reach out to community more effectively and consistently
• Must look at long term financial stability of community
• Recognize people resist change
• Need to invest in schools to add value to community which in turn will bring business to the community
• Change perception that years of residency equals importance in voice
• Leaders can make the effort to engage/listen to as many difficult sectors of town…
  - Senior groups etc
• More solutions need to be brought to the table
• Newmarket has excellent educators. It is the educators that make the education not so much the facility
• Uncertainty of “tuitioning” out of town had educators worried about the jobs

Information: What do you notice/what is important
• Population increasing – school enrollment decreasing
• Losing high schools students to outside schools
• Info missing – Newmarket is not as wealthy as other seacoast communities. Cannot compare properly to neighboring communities
• High test scores- well above state average – this is not wildly know. Poor communication

What do we value? The future of Education for Newmarket

Key Questions and Priorities
• Must be much more financially responsible with entire budget
• Maintain the excellence in education
• Work to determine incentives to retain educators
• Develop parent/staff group (currently in place)
• Begin and develop citizen/staff group (non-parents)
• Determine what really isn’t important to take those issues off the table. Increase ability to focus on only important issues
• Use of technology
• Offering diversity in class offerings creates differences in class sizes. (low population classrooms are criticized.)
• Small town challenge is the lack of diverse curriculum offered in large communities/schools
• Advanced placement classes – important to be in person vs online. Tough sell because of small class sizes
• Need good teachers for good education
• Need to determine curriculum that is needed for community – more important to determine curriculum before facility
• Sooner than later proposal – need to stop throwing money at bad
• Need to take time to fully investigate options
• One best option is determined bring to a prompt vote – don’t drag it out
• Implore leaders/boards to listen to all perspectives of community
• The polar opposite get the attention in these issues. It isn’t about the two extreme sides. It is about all of those in the community in-between.
• Have leaders met with public at various forums
• Have NHListens process with various community groups
• Joint advisory committee visits various groups for community discussions
• It is better to do it right than fast
• Perception – there is a lot of misinformation
• Leaders/boards must communicate better with community
• Consultants are employed by school board - will provide what schools board wants

Final Priorities
• Maintain excellence in education at affordable cost
• Process is important – must include community as a while. Involvement must be advocated throughout entire community and throughout entire process.
• All options must be brought to the table. All options must be heard and respected.
• Leaders must communicate in all medias (some don’t have cable, internet etc.)
• Must embrace process before able to embrace decision
• Once final options are identified – all citizens should be surveyed (straw poll)

Group F – Amy
Community Values
• Sense of community togetherness “neighborhood” fee; - security, safety
• Downtown brings people together
• Feels like home
• Along with identity of schools (Rec etc.)
• Economic – small business vs big box
• Affordable to live here
• Accessibility to government – citizen voice/citizens invested

Threats
• Potential of tax rates going up
• Without school solution, loss of value- community
• Misinformation (rumors)
• Being “penny wise, pound foolish”
  - Not learning from past mistakes
• “selling out” to big business to leverage tax rate
• Tuitioning out will impact local business revenue and community feel

Role(s) of schools
• Provide “magnet” community center
• Support of community business
• Maintain connection with local government
• Educate out students to be citizens and for life beyond high school

Key Questions
• Curriculum – increase in priority re STEM
• Ingredients – that we are academically competitive
• Being accredited (probation for to facilitators?)
• Equitable educational opportunities for all types of learners and their aspirations (AS, enrichment, SP.ED etc.)
• To be a district that attracts and retains good teachers

What is noticed in info-
• Number of students/population could/cannot be served by current facilities
• Opportunities beyond core curriculum – e.g. arts, music, sports

Criteria for future of NM schools
• Long term planning (25-40 years) vs short term
• Getting accurate information
• Balance – balancing education costs with values with wants/needs
• Ask the NM community what they believe they can afford/willing to pay
• Ask the educators what they need

Report Out
• Value of long term planning for schools vs short term with consideration of the economic and social impact
• Balancing education costs with wants/needs/values
• Clear, timely, objective information shared broadly (w/ the community)

Group G – Kathy
Values: Education/other
• Safe community – at all hours
• Small town feel family oriented
• Defined downtown – main street
• Passion “defines Newmarket”
• Sense of community
• Value of community building
• Sidewalks and walking - investment in a walking community
• Community wide activity
• Great community
• Central location for activity
• Newmarket share with other communities rec center/10k/fields
- Summer program
- Shared parenting/parenting by community
- All about result of people having a vision 10-15 years ago – vision/investment/support
- Ability to recognize that education is changing and Newmarket is part of that global change

Threats
- Lack of trust in government/each other/everything/SB/TC/teacher/admin
- “if I don’t do it myself” attitude/outlook
- Micromanagement of town
- Not trusting elected officials
- Suspension/paranoia
- Greater cultural issue not just here
- Elected officials not trusting townee’s
- Previous incident of corruption
- 6 superintendents in 10 years (average tenure NH dropping to 3 years)
- If we don’t have a school in our community we’ll lose a sense of community
- If we can’t provide wide educational opportunities then do we threaten our future
- Will our students have the skills to come back
- Economic threats associated with school
- Keeping human resources invested
- Multiple small communities – Newmarket, old school Newmarket, elderly (ie school, moody pt., college students, trains, tory rentals that aren’t always taking.
- Rumor mill on social media
- Renters – potentially not long term/possibly less invested in long term planning
- Winter rentals
- Old new England attitude of “you’re not from here”
- Localism (cliques: neighboring towns)
- Uncertainty in the school is hurting home sales
- Lamprey Health Center expanding mental health which could change future population and related needs
- Downshift of state and federal expenses
- Funding from pop tart
- Penalties for 1 town district
- Unwillingness to expand districts
- Lack of regionalization
- Idea: regionalization of town services and intrajurisdictional cooperation
  - Cultural opposition in town to this
- Social media – good/bad/foolish info available 24/7, can validate option
- Consumers of regionalization

Brainstorm – most important issues
What do you want decision makers to know?
- Science test scores vs other and test scores good
- Population change in the schools
• Elementary vs high school – 90 person difference over ten years
• 1250 kids
• 1000 in school
• 600+ private, homeschooled, graduated
• Private education will always be a factor in the population shift from elementary to high school
• Dynamics should be defined
• Population change in general
• Elementary school has always been bigger – high school viewed as lacking so kids go out of town – makes more sense to pay tuition than to sell and move
• Scale on graph difficult to read
• Value in “if we build it they will come”
• Is there a longer window to look at?

Most important ingredients
• Strong guidance department
• Quality teachers
• Technology – effective instruction
• Quality curriculum
• Safe and healthy leaning environment
• Exceeding min std.
• Meet the needs of all learners along the whole spectrum
• Student leadership and citizenship engagement
• Students having a sense of possibility and opportunity
• Tradition – your jerseys in your gym
• Resources ex science lab, lap top
• Longevity of quality teachers and enough
• Facilities that are safe and provide what is needed
• Career tech ed.
• Extracurricular opportunities – sports, band, clubs, esc
• Safety: disaster/crisis/worst case scenario contingency plan
• Availability of electives – music, arts
• Why is town council listed a decision maker –“town council has no legal say on the issue” – TC member says but a voice in the community.

Criteria to School Board and other decision makers:
• Own new school
• Address low science scores and how
• Don’t lost ground in other areas (math/reading)
• Curriculum that emphasizes strengths and strengthens weaknesses
• Want pride in our school
• Advantage of small class
• Opportunities for all students – college, trades
• Dependable sensible
• Long term plan
- Want it to last
- Operating costs – keep in mind that energy costs are going up
- Energy efficiency
- Low maintenance
- Expansion planning
- Think of the school as more than just a school
- How can school combine resources to add to the community
- Use building in off hours/summer
- Supporting ADA
- Supporting extra-curricular activities
- Structure facility so people/groups can rent spaces
- Has to get state aid funding
- Explore resources in greater area for specialties
- Think broadly – esp. for low population programs
- Question being a provider for special classes vs being a consumer
- Explore being a magnet school
- VHS – virtual high school – use it
- VLACS – use it
- Are there some services we should specialize in vs spreading ourselves thin?
- How are connecting the community with academic opportunities
- Connection with the community
- Respect school-downtown connection
- Impact of bussing out of town on bus community
- Keep out money in Newmarket
- Want our kids here
- Not interest in kids commuting
- Locate facility in town limits
- Willing to pay the cost of keeping school here
- It will be different if kids are out of town
- Parent/teacher connection difficulty in another town
- We want a say in education
- Pay attention to the 3-6pm gap in supervision
  - extracurricular activities
  - Sports
  - Engaging activities
  - Responsible activities for youth
- It is ok to move on from previously discussed and over discussed topics
- Need a decision making process that is forward moving and productive
- Need a timeline for a solution
- Need a process that allows consensus

Report out
• Losing a school in our community will adversely impact students, families, business, parent involvement in schools, self-governance, long term financials, the towns equity in our schools
• Quality education and an adequate facility – what that means to us
• Concerns in drop odd in school population
• Community ties to education: tradition, resource sharing, connections
• A mind towards inclusion across the entire spectrum
• Newmarket has done amazing things with a long term vision and that can happen with schools.

Group H – Eleanor

Community Values –
• Tight knit community – help, watching out for each other, comes together for events, sickness, “nobody wants”
• Unique and valuable as a town
• Lots of volunteers in schools
• Last standing high school that isn’t regional
• Schools, playing field and rec is walking distance to town
• Sense of history
• Downtown – richness, variety
• Diverse eclectic population
• Diverse age – college students
• Community based health center
• No urban renewal
• Core identity in downtown
• It’s safe
• Access to information
• Voice gets heard
• Good communication
• Community participation

Threats
• Losing school community
• Kids don’t fall through the cracks in school (or at least the school works hard to prevent that)
• Social media criticism
• Confidence in elected officials
• Community mobilization and unity
• Big schools, feel lost/don’t belong, large classes
• NH State Funding (lack of)
• Lack of state support
• Capacity to pay for private schools – some families can’t want about those kids, someone who can pay keeps their kids in Newmarket
• Private schools threaten kids sense of community
• Kids in different schools than each other if sent to other towns
• Cost of living, home values as they rise (but could give to economic development)
• Holding on to past issue and reluctance to economic development to move on
• Loss of faith in the future, each other
• Ability to listen to other opinions
• Lack of respect
• Easy to say no
• Losing valuable school employees
• Community investment in schools, complacency
• Divisive community issue (all have a corrosive effect on diversity)
• Need for diverse population
• Threat is (?) town and state – financial threat

Key Questions and Priorities
• Discussion of education should not be driven by enrollment but programming - missing context on regulations that have changed, need to look forward 20 years solution, set up long term success, what is need had changed since this building was built
• Need for flexibility for future changes in terms of new program changes and enrollment – this case needs to be made – ne require programs, special needs
• Avoid need to rebuild in 20 years – maybe ability to add on or expand
• Capacity for schools buildings to serve community (adult classes, space for seniors)
• Need for accessibility for those with disabilities
• Encourage relationships between kids and teachers
• Table school staff
• Climate of respect
• Engaging, challenging, enriching curriculum for all students
• Needs map/communication
• Need for more homework club (which is tutoring)
• Need support for struggling students and their parents
• Communication and respect: parents/teacher/school admin/students/community members
  - Can be facilitated by small scale of community distance
• However smallness can reduce opportunities of what’s offered in school
• Arts are vital and has been cost recently
• Create expression not just academics
• Wide array of experiences is important for kids - how to achieve in small setting?
• Opportunity for kids to make choice about their futures (arts, academics, tech)
• Not enough technology in school now
• Kids have to be familiar with teach/computers/typing
• Training for staff to us tech/help kids use it
• Its world class
• Flexibility in teaching tech because it changes so often
• School board currently has good mission statement

Criteria
• Timelines, do it soon, make a decision
• Find a way toward resolution
• Pay attention to conversation today
• Pay attention to mission statement of school board
• Set foals (by the school board)
• Concrete plans (that can be revised) 1year, 3year, 5year, 10 year
• Align community and school board goals
• Communication
• Let go of what has happened already
• Affordability and financial consideration
• More face to face communication
• Elected officials should model positive behavior in any capacity: communication, social media
• Publish positive news from school board and schools
• Detailed communication
• Costs
• Long term vision for the community
• What would be best, effective, trustworthy, why to communicate?
• Community involvement – engage the diverse community here

Final priorities
• Flexibility of the building and curriculum as a community resources – adaptable to a changing world
• Communication – community members/town boards/parents/schools/students
• Affordability – impact on school/families – questions remain of how to access what is affordable
• Moving on, letting go of the past and focus on the future and find a solution
• More meetings like this
Appendix D: Summary of Participant Evaluations

Participant Demographics:

- The average age at the conversations was 46.1 years of age, with a range from 20 to 70 years old.
- 34.5 percent of participants identified as male and 63.6 identified as female.
- 9.3 percent of participants identified as retired and 88.9 percent were not retired.
- 5.9 percent of participants identified as students and 92.2 percent were not students.

Participants reported highest educational attainment of the following levels:

- K-8: 0 percent
- High School/GED: 3.4 percent
- Some College: 13.8 percent
- Associates: 5.1 percent
- Bachelors: 29.3 percent
- Graduate/Professional: 48.3 percent

Participants reported the following political persuasions:

- Liberal: 14.0 percent
- Somewhat liberal: 31.6 percent
- Moderate: 38.6 percent
- Somewhat conservative: 10.5 percent
- Conservative: 5.3 percent

Feedback on NH Listens Processes from Participants:

Participants were asked questions about the experience of participating in a NH Listens conversation. 72 people attended the conversations, but only 60 completed the survey. Of those who responded, participants expressed the following views:

*The facilitator was prepared.*

1.7 percent strongly disagreed, 1.7 percent disagreed, 20.3 percent agreed, and 76.3 percent agreed strongly.

*The facilitator made sure everyone took part in the conversation.*

1.7 percent strongly disagreed, 0 percent disagreed, 20.3 percent agreed, and 77.9 percent agreed strongly.
The facilitator did not impose his or her ideas or values on the group.

1.7 percent strongly disagreed, 0 percent disagreed, 6.8 percent agreed, and 91.5 percent agreed strongly.

The information in the discussion guide was useful to me in the conversation.

1.7 percent strongly disagreed, 5 percent disagreed, 38.9 percent agreed, and 54.2 percent agreed strongly.

Our group talked about the most important issues related to this topic.

1.7 percent strongly disagreed, 1.7 percent disagreed, 27.6 percent agreed, and 68.9 percent agreed strongly.

It seemed as though everyone had an equal chance to express his/her views.

1.7 percent strongly disagreed, 0 percent disagreed, 28.8 percent agreed, and 69.5 percent agreed strongly.

I learned new things about this topic from other members of my group.

1.7 percent strongly disagreed, 18.6 percent disagreed, 33.4 percent agreed, and 45.8 percent agreed strongly.

The conversation helped me to become better informed about the issues.

1.8 percent strongly disagreed, 17.5 percent disagreed, 47.4 percent agreed, and 33.3 percent agreed strongly.

Because of this conversation, I have a better understanding of people who I disagree with and their opinions.

10.3 percent strongly disagreed, 13.8 percent disagreed, 44.8 percent agreed, and 31.0 percent agreed strongly.

I felt that my perspective was respected in this conversation.

1.7 percent strongly disagreed, 0 percent disagreed, 22.0 percent agreed, and 76.3 percent agreed strongly.

I understand how the results from this conversation will be used to inform next steps.

3.4 percent strongly disagreed, 3.4 percent disagreed, 37.3 percent agreed, and 55.9 percent agreed strongly.

The time allotted for the session was
Not enough (8.9 percent), Just the right amount of time (91.2 percent), Too much time (0 percent)

_I am glad I participated in these community conversations._

3.4 percent strongly disagreed, 0 percent disagreed, 15.3 percent agreed, and 81.4 percent agreed strongly.

_I would attend another community conversation on this or a different topic._

Yes (91.5 percent), No (0 percent), Maybe (8.5 percent)

**Note: More information about data collection is available upon request. All of the following data collection has been approved by the University of New Hampshire ethics board.**
How NH Listens Collects and Reports Findings

NH Listens bases this kind of community development work on small-group facilitated dialogue (typically eight to twelve participants per group) that produces specific findings. Depending on the topic, the findings might be at a more general level, articulating broad sets of values or criteria for decision making, or quite specific recommendations, such as concrete steps for action. Whether a dialogue is constructed as a one-time event that stretches over several hours or multiple events occurring over several weeks, participants typically move through a four-stage process supported by the facilitator.

These stages include:

1. Introductions and personal stories about how participants relate to the focus topic of the dialogue (including their prior experiences with and opinions about the topic)
2. Review of the available data on the topic to ensure common, comparable levels of knowledge among participants
3. Analysis of the topic and its multiple dimensions, leading to selection by the group of a small number of key issues (three to four) that serve as the basis for subsequent discussion from which the group generates concrete actions and recommendations
4. In-depth discussion of the selected key issues and articulation of a final set of views, values, or recommended actions directed at relevant decision makers

Throughout the dialogue, facilitators, and participants document the conversation on large flipcharts and identify recurring statements or themes. That is, the information that is gleaned from each small group is inductively analyzed, moving from specific comments made by group members to general statements that represent the shared ideas and perspectives of the group. Both agreements and disagreements are recorded, to ensure that all points of view are heard and documented.