

# Newman Elementary School

School Improvement Plan

2023-2026

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**NEWMAN  
ELEMENTARY**  
**WHERE LEARNING ROCKS!**

## Newman Elementary School Mission

The Newman Elementary School is an inclusive neighborhood school located in Needham, Massachusetts. The building itself opened its doors in 1960 and has since served as a junior high school, state police barracks, and now as Needham's largest elementary school. The physical structure sits on 60 beautiful acres abutting protected wetlands. The grounds are complete with large play structures and newly renovated playing fields. The wetlands provide an amazing site for bringing our curriculum to life and the size of the building and its facilities attract many community programs including community theater, cultural arts events, and community youth sports. Newman Elementary School is the largest elementary school in the Needham Public School District. Serving over 680 (711) students in grades Preschool-5, Newman offers an engaging and supportive learning environment for all children. We are an inclusive school, providing a variety of instructional settings that best suit the needs of students' individual learning styles. We are a diverse and inclusive community serving families from a multitude of cultures, backgrounds, gender and LGBTQ+ identities. In addition, Newman houses two of the district's special education programs including the Early Childhood Center, an integrated preschool program and Elementary Intensive Learning Center (ILC), a specialized program for students with complicated learning profiles. Finally, just as we encourage our students to be active learners, we ourselves are a Professional Learning Community, using student work and data to provide targeted and meaningful instruction so that all students can reach their fullest potential. We are proud of the supportive parents, dedicated teachers, and enthusiastic students who make up Newman School.





**MISSION:**

A school and community partnership that creates excited learners, inspires excellence, & fosters integrity.

**VISION:**

Preparing ALL Needham Public Schools students to be:

- Creative Thinkers and Problem Solvers;
- Communicators and Collaborators;
- Socially and Culturally Responsive Contributors;
- Responsible and Resilient Individuals;
- Empowered Learners

**CORE VALUES:**

- Scholarship
- Community
- Citizenship
- Personal Growth

## **NEEDHAM STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**

### **1. All Students Are Drivers of Their Own Learning**

- 1A) Incorporate opportunities for student choice, independent learning, & personalized pathways*
- 1B) Provide structures & experiences that enable student efficacy, leadership, and voice*
- 1C) Teach students the content & skills necessary for them to grow personally and academically.*

### **2. All Students Experience Integrative Teaching & Learning**

- 2A) Extend interdisciplinary teaching and learning practices Pre-K to 12*
- 2B) Embed Portrait Competencies, Technology, Inclusive Practices, SEL, and Equity into all curricula and instructional practices*
- 2C) Provide opportunities for students to demonstrate knowledge and skills through multiple means of expression.*

### **3. All Students Learn & Grow Within Adaptable Environments**

- 3A) Support and design classroom models and environments that foster collaboration & innovation*
- 3B) Provide time, schedules, and spaces that promote learning objectives*
- 3C) Complement instruction with accessible learning beyond the classroom, within the community, and in partnership with families.*

### **4. Infrastructure Supports Needs of All Students**

- 4A) Provide staffing, facilities, and budget resources aligned to district priorities*
- 4B) Implement a recruitment, retention, and development process for staff growth and diversity*
- 4C) Establish a professional learning structure supporting equity and the Portrait vision.*

School Goals	SP	Action Steps/ Strategies Employed	Impact on Students	Progress
<p>#1--Teachers will partner with colleagues to address the targeted academic and social/emotional needs of students on a consistent basis.</p>	<p>1C 2B 2C 3A 3B 4A 4C</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Establish school wide expectations for teacher engagement in coaching cycles and consultations based on student data</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Establish a tiered system of support for students to receive interventions in SEL</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide opportunities for vertical teams to collaborate on the effective academic and SEL strategies that have impacted learning</li> </ul>	<p>All students will receive consistent, targeted intervention that results in increased student achievement and emotional wellness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible and Resilient Individuals</li> <li>• Empowered Learners</li> </ul>	
<p>#2--Teachers will foster the emotional development and social and emotional skills, attitudes, and behaviors of students so they can be successful across a variety of settings*</p> <p>*© CASEL 2018</p>	<p>1A 1B 1C 2B 3A 3C</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Develop a tiered system of behavioral supports</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Explore and implement best practices for supporting students' executive functioning skills, including, but not limited to, explicit skills instruction</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Promote student self-reflection on which strategies support their behavioral, emotional, and sensory needs to increase self-awareness and independence</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Promote growth mindset through integrated reflection within academic projects</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Support wellness of all school staff by promoting a culture of self-care, mindfulness, and gratitude through the use of Restorative Circles</li> </ul>	<p>Students' social and emotional needs will be met by all teachers in the Newman School, allowing students to be successful across all areas of the school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Socially and Culturally Responsive Contributors;</li> <li>• Responsible and Resilient Individuals</li> </ul>	
<p>#3--Increase the sense of belonging at school for all members of the school community.</p>	<p>1B 1C 2B 3A 3B 3C</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Explore what it means to “belong” at the Newman School with staff, students, and families</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Survey students on their sense of belonging at school</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Disaggregate data to determine if specific groups are feeling more isolated than others</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Develop support plans to address reported SEL or school climate needs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Explore opportunities to support new to Needham and non-Needham resident students and families</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Evaluate effectiveness of support plans</li> </ul>	<p>Teachers, students, and families will collaborate to increase the sense of belonging of all members of the Newman School community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Socially and Culturally Responsive Contributors</li> <li>• Responsible and Resilient Individuals</li> <li>• Empowered Learners</li> </ul>	

School Goals	SP	Action Steps/ Strategies Employed	Impact on Students	Progress
#4--Effectively communicate to our diverse Newman caregiver community in a variety of ways	1A 1B 2A 2B 2C 3C 4C	<input type="checkbox"/> Examine current school to home communication at the classroom and school level <input type="checkbox"/> Establish consistent modes for communicating academic expectations for students, including opportunities for work shares, portfolio reviews, and student led conferencing. <input type="checkbox"/> Create additional opportunities for students to reflect upon their work and communicate their goals with families	School and family will work together to support the needs of students in a collaborative manner <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Creative Thinkers and Problem Solvers</li> <li>● Communicators and Collaborators</li> <li>● Socially and Culturally Responsive Contributors</li> <li>● Responsible and Resilient Individuals</li> <li>● Empowered Learners</li> </ul>	



# Glossary of Terms

## Achievement Gap

The observed, persistent disparity in measures of educational performance among subgroups of U.S. students, especially groups defined by socioeconomic status (SES), race/ethnicity and gender.

## CASEL

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. Their mission is to help make evidence-based social and emotional learning (SEL) an integral part of education from preschool through high school.

## Community Meetings

Monthly school assemblies that follow a Responsive Classroom meeting format, which invite the school community to greet one another, share their accomplishments, participate in an activity and hear about class/school news and announcements.

## Culturally Responsive Teaching

Culturally Responsive Teaching is a pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning ([Ladson-Billings, 1994](#)).

## Economically Disadvantaged (ED)

A term used by government institutions in allocating free school meals to "a student who is a member of a household that meets the income eligibility guidelines for free or reduced-price meals (less than or equal to 185% of Federal Poverty Guidelines)" or business grants.

## Emotional Regulation

Controlling one's behavior, emotions, and thoughts in the pursuit of long-term goals. More specifically, emotional self-regulation refers to the ability to manage disruptive emotions and impulses

## English Learner (EL)

English learners, or ELs, are students who are unable to communicate fluently or learn effectively in English, who often come from non-English-speaking homes and backgrounds, and who typically require specialized or modified instruction in both the English language and in their academic courses.

## Executive Functioning

Executive function and self-regulation skills are the mental processes that enable us to plan, focus attention, remember, and juggle multiple tasks.

## Growth Mindset

This concept, coined by Carol Dweck, means that you believe in your ability to become better through hard work, and help from others. Dweck and her team became interested in the attitude of students when it comes to failure. After studying the behavior of students and children, the term "growth mindset" came about.

## High Needs

DESE defines "high needs" as an unduplicated count of all students in a school or district belonging to at least one of the following individual subgroups: students with disabilities, English language learners (ELL) and former ELL students, or low income students (eligible for free/reduced price school lunch). For a school to be considered to be making progress toward narrowing proficiency gaps, the cumulative PPI for both the "all students" group and high needs students must be 75 or higher.  
academic courses.

## Intervention

Academic interventions are additional instruction that supplements the general curriculum (regular classroom instruction) and may include supports outside of the regular classroom (i.e. pull-out for small group instruction) necessary to improve academic performance.

## Mindfulness

Being mindful means having your mind on what you are doing. It's the opposite of rushing or doing too many things at once. To be mindful, you slow down to take your time. You do one thing at a time. You focus on what you're doing in a calm way.

**Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)**

A Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) is a framework for how school districts can build the necessary systems to ensure that each and every student receives a high quality educational experience. It is designed to support schools with proactively identifying and addressing the strengths and needs of all students by optimizing data-driven decision-making, progress monitoring, and the use of evidence-based supports and strategies with increasing intensity to sustain student growth.

**Portfolio**

A portfolio is a systematic collection of student work that represents student activities, accomplishments, and achievements over a specific period of time in one or more areas of the curriculum.

**Professional Development (PD)**

Education for teachers and other school staff regarding school and district based initiatives. Currently, PD time is provided during staff meetings, early release days, staff meetings and during the school day as needed.

**Professional Learning Community (PLC)**

Grade level teams that collaborate to develop strategic goals aimed towards increasing student achievement.

**SEL**

Social and Emotional Learning

**Self-Awareness**

The abilities to understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts. This includes capacities to recognize one's strengths and limitations with a well-grounded sense of confidence and purpose.

**Self-Care**

The practice of taking an active role in protecting one's own well-being and happiness, in particular during periods of stress.

**Sensory Motor Breaks**

A sensory break or “brain break” is a fancy word for just taking a regular old break from seated learning activities or sedentary activities. It is a time for students to gain the sensory input they need in their bodies to stay alert, on task, and focused.

**Student Centered Coaching Cycle**

A teacher in partnership with an instructional coach (literacy, math, technology), engages in a cycle that enhances the opportunity for teachers to co-plan, rehearse, co-teach, and then debrief with their coaches so that they can target specific student learning goals.

**Student Led Conferences**

A student-led conference is a preplanned meeting in which students demonstrate responsibility for their academic performance by providing a review of their work for parents and teachers.

**Student Support Team (SST)**

A group of Newman classroom teachers, special educators, guidance counselors, instructional coaches, and administrators that meets weekly to discuss individual and small groups of students and provide strategies and/or targeted interventions that can be implemented to support student growth. Data is collected based on student progress to determine if interventions have been successful.

**Work Shares/Celebrations**

Student Work Shares or Celebrations are an authentic means to recognize a child's effort or accomplishment, rather than focusing on reward systems. Students and others in the school community are invited to view the students' work and see all that they have accomplished.