F.A.Q.

Grandview Construction and Recess

Why wasn't I aware that this construction was occurring?

After the referendum to add additional space to both school buildings was voted down in September 2023, the need for extra space at Grandview still remained. The Board, in ongoing discussions with our architect, determined that building an addition at Grandview—funded through the portion of the district's Capital Reserve that was previously earmarked for the referendum and with no tax impact to residents—was a feasible and practical solution.

This plan was mentioned at multiple Board of Education meetings in an effort to inform and engage the public:

- January 2025 meeting - discussed at the January meeting that the Buildings and Grounds Committee met regarding an expansion to Grandview and that additional details would be coming at the February meeting
- February 2025 meeting - an email was sent to all school families on February 13th detailing the upcoming meeting on February 19th seeking engagement. Discussed at the February 19th meeting in greater detail. Presented in full detail at the February 19th meeting alongside a Q&A session with the architect
- March 2025 meeting - the board voted to move forward with the project
- June 2025 meeting - updates to the project were discussed
- July 2025 - presentation and review at the Borough of North Caldwell Planning Board meeting
- August 20, 2025 - a letter was sent to all district families from Chris Checchetto, the new Superintendent of Schools, outlining the near complete access driveway project and the Grandview addition
- August 27, 2025 - a letter sent from the Grandview Principal, Mr. Bifulco, further detailing new procedures related to the construction as well as recess

Why is the school adding a new wing?

We're expanding the school to accommodate growing enrollment and the need for more specialized learning spaces. The new wing will include six modern classrooms designed to support our PreK–Grade 3 students.

When will the new wing be completed?

Construction is on schedule and expected to finish for the 2026-2027 school year. Families will continue to receive updates on progress throughout the project.

Will safety be impacted during construction?

Student safety is our top priority. Construction zones will be securely fenced off, and all contractors will follow strict safety protocols. Students will never have access to the construction zone.

We have been, and will remain, in consistent dialogue with the North Caldwell Police Department as well as the Office of School Preparedness and Emergency Planning throughout the duration of this project.

Will construction take place during school hours?

Yes, some work will occur during the school day. However, we're working closely with our project manager, who is stationed at Grandview two days per week, to minimize noise and disruption during instructional time.

We're proactively taking steps to ensure learning continues uninterrupted. While mindful that dust can be generated during construction, we have remedies in place to keep it from spreading into non-construction zones, including barriers in the construction area as well as air purifiers in each classroom.

Will students be relocated during construction?

No classroom relocations are planned at this time or in the future. If any substantial change to your child's normal routine becomes necessary, you will receive advance notice.

What type of communication can we expect moving forward?

There will be a dedicated section of the NCBOE website on the homepage navigation bar under "News" that will provide construction updates. The first of these will be posted shortly.

These updates will provide the status of the work completed to date as well as what is scheduled to be completed in the upcoming weeks.

How has recess been impacted during this project?

Due to the access driveway project and the current expansion of the Grandview wing, the field and driveway area previously used for recess are not available at this time. That area is needed for the initial phases of construction for access as well as staging of materials.This decision prioritizes student and staff safety.

Recess has been relocated to the front of the school building. Research indicates that unstructured playtime, physical activity, and opportunities for social-emotional development are the most important components of recess. This location meets those needs.

Is there a playground at this new recess location?

While we do not currently have a playground, students continue to have access to a variety of activities, including kickball, box ball, four square, hula hoops, tag, chalk, independent drawing/games, jump rope, basketball and innovative games they create together.

Students also have access to a grassy area closest to the school, which has allowed them to play additional games such as soccer and football. These activities help students stay active and engaged, and we will continue to add variety to support their play and movement. The classroom addition project will also yield a new, state of the art, playground structure.

Are there plans to secure a temporary playground?

We share the belief that children need opportunities for outdoor exercise, as outlined above. However, temporary playground installation would face NJ Administrative Code hurdles prior to required inspections by the insurance carrier, NJSIG.

In New Jersey, the Department of Community Affairs provides regulations and resources for ensuring the safety of playgrounds, including inspection requirements. If temporary equipment were to be installed on an asphalt lot or grassy area, it would be required to comply with the Playground Safety Subcode regarding surfacing materials. This would involve extensive excavation of the existing area, the purchase of a suitable undersurface, and finally, the purchase of the equipment itself. The costs associated with this would be substantial and duplicative, in addition to the potential legal liabilities such a structure presents.

What safety measures have been implemented at this new recess location?

A temporary fence has been installed along the grass area by Hamilton Drive East. This not only serves as a visual and physical deterrent for students approaching the street but also prevents equipment from rolling into the roadway.

Clearly marked security stanchions have been placed in the driveway area on both sides of the loop, and staff have been strategically positioned in these areas. All recess staff have communication radios and are trained in our safety protocols.

Is this space overcrowded?

The current area is comparable in size to the previous recess play area in terms of square footage.

Is there shade?

While the district considered installing a tent in the current area to provide shade, during recess times the sun is positioned behind the school building, naturally creating shaded areas in the front. In addition, there are plenty of trees that assist in providing shade.

Is this recess location permanent for this school year?

No. Once the access driveway has been completed in the coming weeks, the plan is to shift recess to the side of the building. As with any construction project, this is subject to modification. All procedures and protocols related to this change will be reviewed in advance with the NCPD.

If this potential change proves viable, the new area will include both asphalt and grass areas and will alleviate concerns regarding students playing in front of the school. We are also looking at options for shade in this area. Families will receive advance notice with all procedures relevant to any transition.
