

RSU 63 ACE Committee Final Report

3/12/2026

Introduction

The ACE Committee was established by the RSU 63 School Board to identify and recommend efficiencies across district operations. To achieve this, the committee formed sub-committees focused on key areas: Facilities, Transportation, Public Outreach Survey, Student Costs and Programs, and Operational Costs. Each sub-committee conducted in-depth reviews and produced reports, which were each approved by majority vote of the ACE Committee and accepted by the School Board. This final report provides high-level summaries of the findings and concludes with the primary recommendations drawn directly from those sub-committee reports.

Facilities Sub-Committee Summary

The Facilities Sub-Committee examined space utilization, consolidation scenarios, capital expenditures, land/grounds, and safety across Eddington School, Holden School, and Holbrook Middle School. Current buildings are not facing acute space shortages, though some areas are underutilized due to design and age. Hypothetical consolidations were explored conceptually, focusing on capacity and operational challenges. Major capital needs include boiler replacements (Eddington: \$717,550–\$979,825; Holden: \$330,000–\$468,250), roof repairs (Eddington: \$57,800–\$59,500; Holden: \$19,000–\$20,500; Holbrook: \$40,000–\$44,450), septic systems (~\$150,000 each for Eddington and Holden), and a generator for Eddington (\$50,000+). Safety assessments highlighted Holden's superior response times for police and fire services compared to Eddington. Holden also offers access to greater outdoor space and expansion potential due to Town owned land adjacent to the school which can be transferred to the school at no cost. The sub-committee concluded that closing one school is feasible at current enrollment, with closure of two (consolidating into Holbrook) only if enrollment drops below 300 students. The attached floor plans depict one possible layout to accommodate students in the two consolidation scenarios.

Transportation Sub-Committee Summary

The Transportation Sub-Committee reviewed opportunities for cost savings and to reduce student ride times. Recommendations include exploring an additional bus to address peak

morning and afternoon routes/times, evaluating a van for outlier stops to shorten overall routes, issuing an RFP to area Bus Companies based on initial estimates (\$650,000 annual contract plus \$12,000 bi-annual sports budget, excluding field trips/practices), and examining morning drop-off adjustments for early-boarding students at passing schools (noting potential capacity concerns). On school closure, fuel cost projections show 2024-2025 totals at \$53,664, with savings of ~30.4% without Eddington (\$37,924) or ~10% without Holden (\$48,342). When comparing closure of one of the elementary schools, the closure of Eddington would result in greater time savings than the closure of Holden according to the study completed last year. Full consolidation to Holbrook would yield larger monetary and time savings. The Central Office reviewed the recommendations and provided a response relative to the feasibility using current resources.

Public Outreach Survey Sub-Committee Summary

The Public Outreach Survey Sub-Committee compiled community feedback via a September 2025 survey. The tally of public comments highlighted key concerns: Education Programs (119 comments), Cost Savings (82), School Closure/Restructure (77), Facility Conditions (60), Class Size (46), Community Impact (44), Transportation Times (32), Taxes (14), Location (8), Consolidation (7), Safety (6), Bullying (4), Retain High School Choice (3), and smaller mentions of other topics like staggered pickups, efficiency, homeschooling, building one school, combining with nearby districts, childcare, homework policy, school budget, and committee timeline.

Student Costs and Programs Sub-Committee Summary

The Student Costs and Programs Sub-Committee analyzed financial and enrollment data for RSU 63, which serves ~435 students across Eddington, Holden, and Clifton with a 10:1 student-teacher ratio. It is worth noting that the 10:1 ratio stated can be misleading and does not mean that there are only 10 students in every class. Per-student spending is \$25,841–\$26,910 (above state median ~\$21,191), and revenue per student is ~\$28,556 (above ~\$21,600), driven by small size, staffing, and special education costs. Special education is a major driver, with statewide growth of 37% per-pupil from 2006–2013 (vs. 17% for regular instruction) due to increased identifications and intensive services; RSU 63's FY26 budget added \$180,197 for this. High costs stem from scale inefficiencies, generous staffing, service burdens, and local funding choices. Consolidation to a single elementary school could reduce some fixed costs but is unlikely to yield major per-student savings, as special education expenses (aides, therapies, transportation) remain tied to

individual needs rather than buildings; Overall savings to the district may still be significant and would mainly come from building maintenance and reductions in fixed overhead costs.

Operational Costs Sub-Committee Summary

The Operational Costs Sub-Committee evaluated impacts of closing one school. Potential savings include administrative/clerical staffing reductions exceeding \$200,000; maintenance supplies/equipment up to \$12,000; waste management up to \$4,000; grounds maintenance decreases; and utility reductions (electricity and others, though precise figures unknown). Staffing would become much more consistent, reducing and in some cases, eliminating the need for travel between schools, and administrators could engage more with students/staff. Unknown costs include insurance and maintenance for a closed facility.

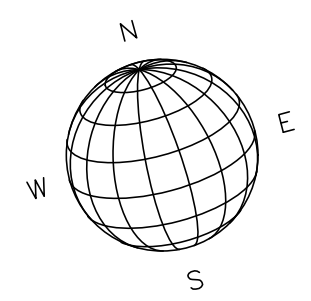
Conclusion and Primary Recommendations

Based on the sub-committee reports, the ACE Committee recommends the following actions to improve efficiencies:

- Close one school, and consolidate into two schools as it is feasible at current enrollment levels.
- Close Eddington Elementary School as it results in greater monetary savings and space flexibility.
- Reconfigure grades with Holden School serving Pre-K through Grade 2 and Holbrook School serving Grades 3 through 8.
- Implement capital improvements when necessary at Holden School, including boiler replacement, roof repairs, and a new septic system.
- Collaborate with the Town of Holden to secure adjacent land as a donation for a fenced outdoor area to accommodate Pre-K and increased student needs.
- Explore transportation enhancements, including adding one bus for peak ride times, using a van for outlier stops, issuing an RFP to area bus companies, and reviewing morning drop-off logistics.

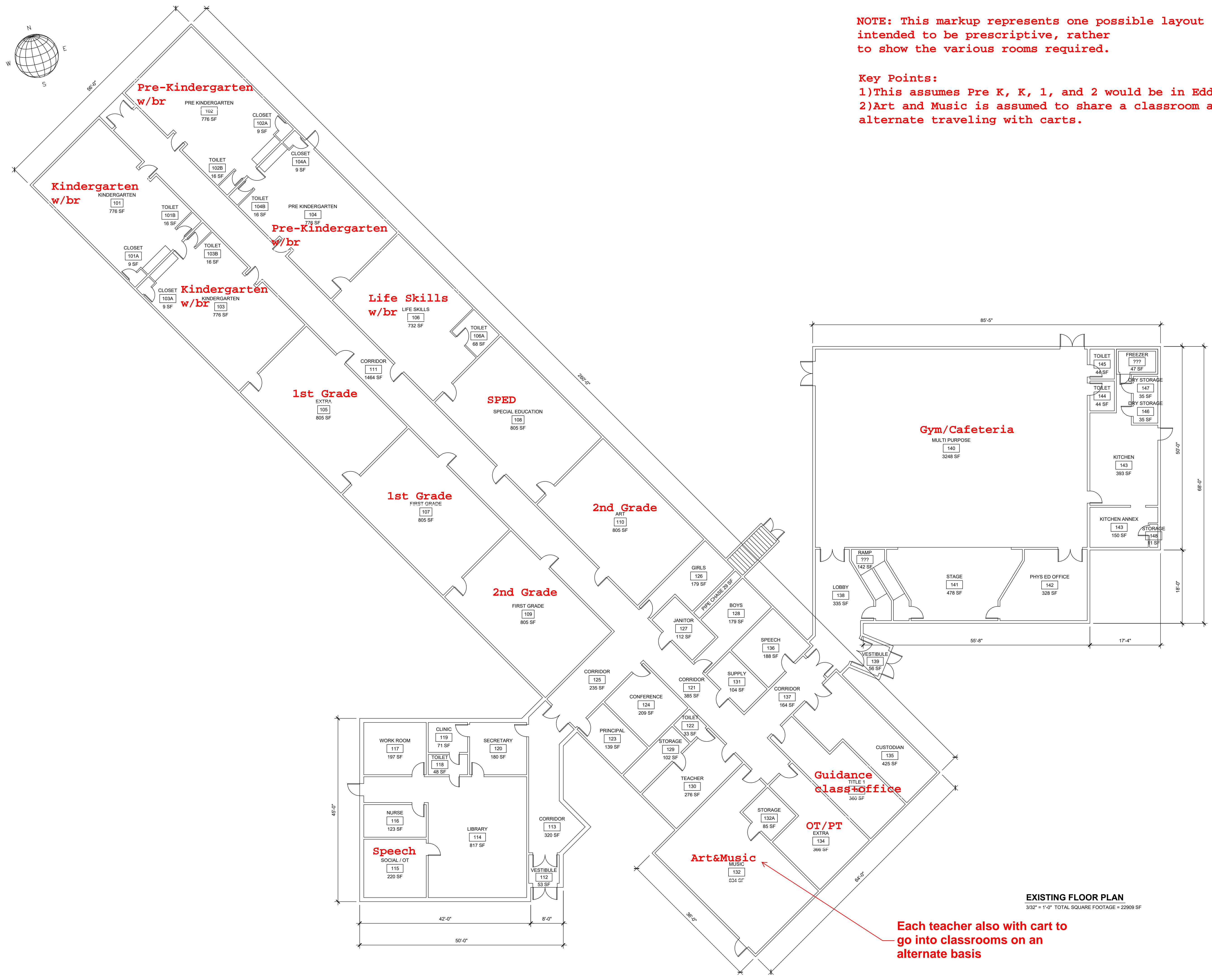
- Acknowledge community feedback emphasizing education programs, cost savings, and school closure impacts.

These recommendations are intended to support informed decision-making by the School Board.



NOTE: This markup represents one possible layout scenario. It is not intended to be prescriptive, rather to show the various rooms required.


Key Points:
 1) This assumes Pre K, K, 1, and 2 would be in Eddington
 2) Art and Music is assumed to share a classroom and alternate traveling with carts.

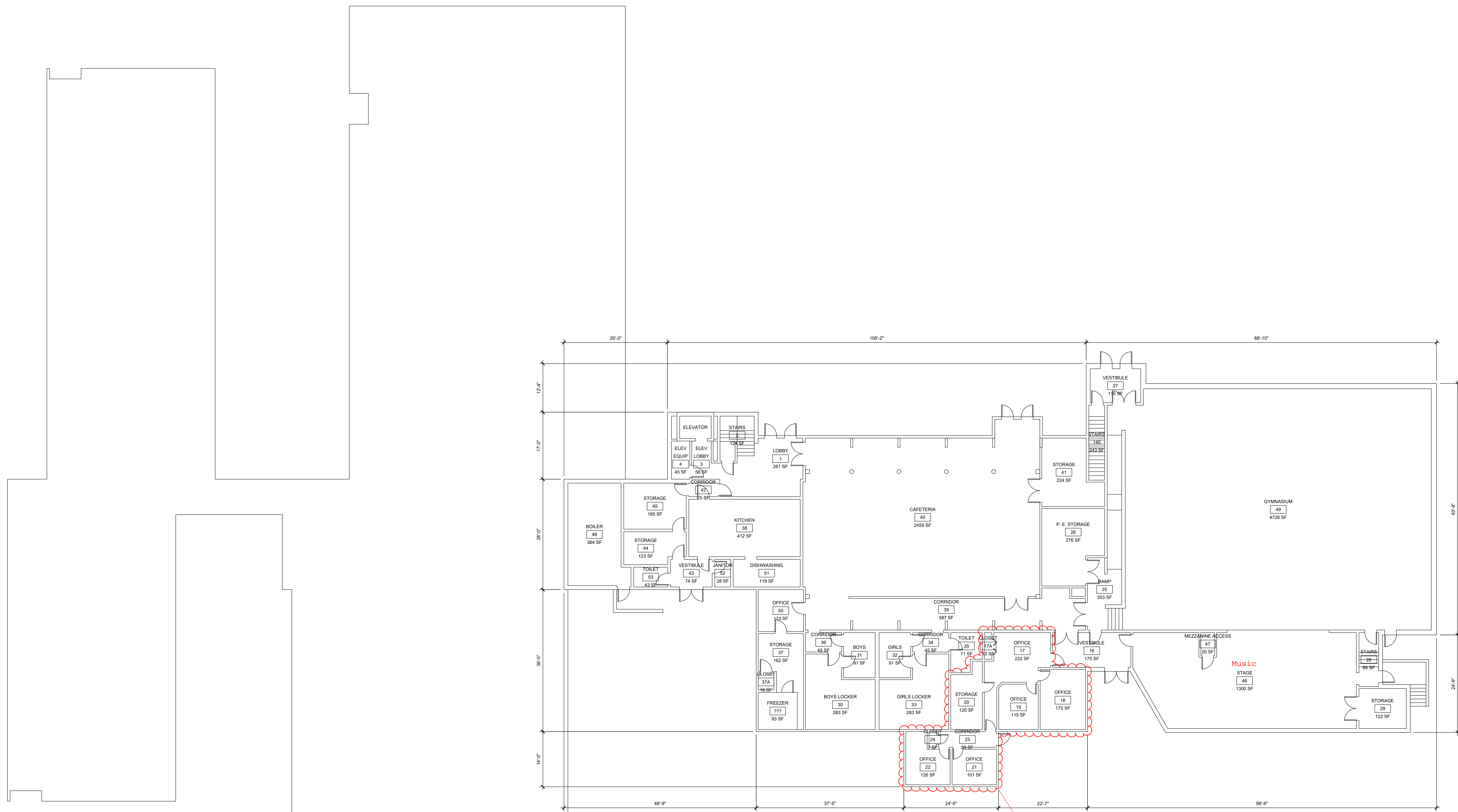
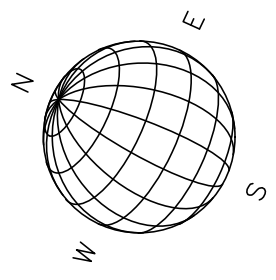


EXISTING FLOOR PLAN
 3/32" = 1'-0" TOTAL SQUARE FOOTAGE = 22909 SF

Each teacher also with cart to go into classrooms on an alternate basis


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DRAWING ISSUE STATUS				
ISSUED FOR REVIEW				
		HALEY WARD ENGINEERING ENVIRONMENTAL SURVEYING One Merchants Plaza, Suite 701 Bangor, Maine 04401 207.987.4824 WWW.HALEYWARD.COM		
PROJECT				
EDDINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL EDDINGTON, MAINE				
TITLE				
EXISTING FLOOR PLAN				
DATE		2025/12/08		SCALE
				AS NOTED
DRAWN BY	DESIGNED BY	CHECKED BY		
RB	---	---		
PROJECT No.		10229.004		
DRAWING No.		A101		



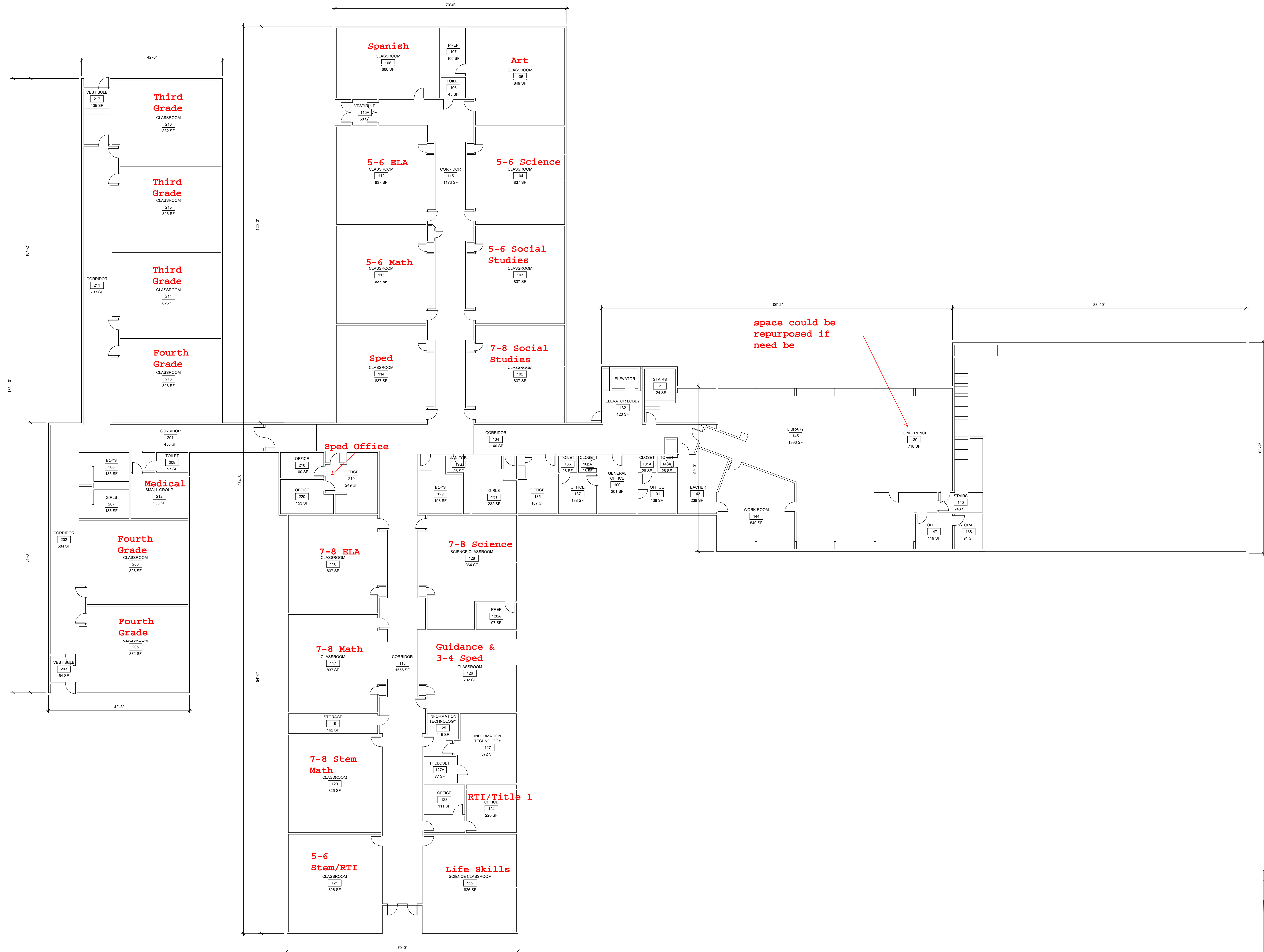
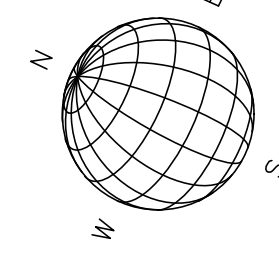
Area could be reconfigured if needs changed

EXISTING FLOOR PLAN LOWER LEVEL
332' x 114' TOTAL SQUARE FOOTAGE LOWER LEVEL = 1877 SF

REV	DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY	CHK
ISSUED FOR REVIEW				
 One Merchants Plaza, Suite 701 Bangor, Maine 04401 WWW.HALEYWARD.COM				
HOLBROOK MIDDLE SCHOOL HOLDEN, MAINE				
EXISTING FLOOR PLAN LOWER LEVEL				
DATE	2025/12/16	SCALE	AS NOTED	
DRAWN BY	RB	DESIGNED BY	CHECKED BY	
PROJECT NO.	10229-004			
DRAWING NO.		A101		

NOTE: This markup represents one possible layout scenario. It is not intended to be prescriptive, rather to show the various rooms required.

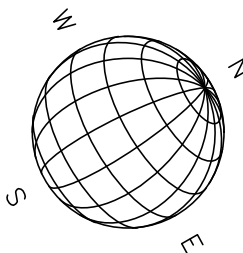
Key Points:
 1) This assumes Grades 3-8 would be in Holbrook
 2) No specials require carts.



space could be repurposed if need be

EXISTING FLOOR PLAN UPPER LEVEL
 332' x 110' TOTAL SQUARE FOOTAGE UPPER LEVEL = 33442 SF

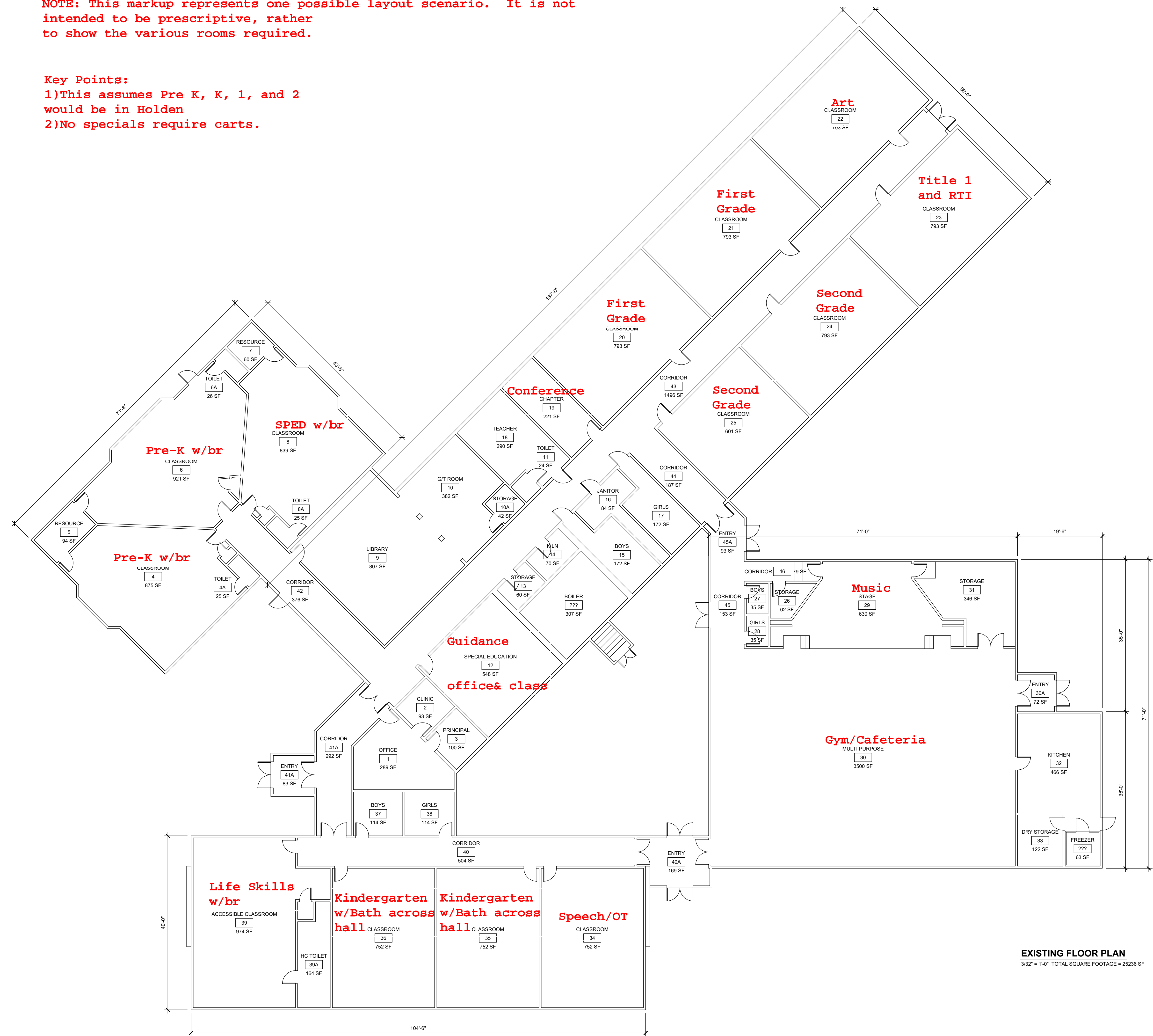
REV	DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY	CHK
ISSUED FOR REVIEW				
 HALEY WARD <small>One Merchants Plaza, Suite 701 Bangor, ME 04401 WWW.HALEYWARD.COM 207.989.4824</small>				
HOLBROOK MIDDLE SCHOOL HOLDEN, MAINE				
EXISTING FLOOR PLAN UPPER LEVEL				
DATE	2025/12/16	SCALE	AS NOTED	
DRAWN BY	RB	DESIGNED BY	CHECKED BY	
PROJECT NO.	10229-004			
DRAWING NO.	A102			



NOTE: This markup represents one possible layout scenario. It is not intended to be prescriptive, rather to show the various rooms required.

Key Points:

- 1) This assumes Pre K, K, 1, and 2 would be in Holden
- 2) No specials require carts.



EXISTING FLOOR PLAN
3/32" = 1'-0" TOTAL SQUARE FOOTAGE = 25236 SF

REV.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY	CHK.
ISSUED FOR REVIEW				
		HALEY WARD ENGINEERING ENVIRONMENTAL SURVEYING One Merchants Plaza, Suite 701 Bangor, Maine 04401 207.987.4824		
PROJECT				
HOLDEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HOLDEN, MAINE				
TITLE				
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