Joint Board Budget Meeting

Monday, December 22, 2025 7:00 PM
South Terrace Elementary School, 530 Stine Drive, Carlton, MN 55718

I. **No open forum at this meeting.**

II. **Beth Downes and Jen Chapman, Ehlers representatives, will present FTE and budget scenarios along with corresponding projections and assumptions for the consolidated school district — attached**

III. **Katie Hildenbrand, Widseth representative, will present various grade level configurations and capacity recommendations to be considered for the consolidated school district - attached**

IV. **The Stakeholder Engagement Committee will provide updates and polling results of the consolidated district name and ISD # for board approval — attached.**

V. **Board Chairs will present an addendum outlining the Sec. of State and County recommendations for a revised board member transition plan — addendum attached**

VI. **Board members will share consolidation committee assignments, progress, and updates.**

VII. **Board chairs will provide updates to the consolidation timeline and progress being made.**

VIII. **General discussion between the joint board members and superintendents.**

IX. **Motion to adjourn.**

December 22, 2025

Carlton Public Schools, ISD 93 and Wrenshall Public Schools, ISD 100

JOINT BOARD SESSION

EHLERS
PUBLIC FINANCE ADVISORS

Prepared by:

Aaron Bushberger, Senior Municipal Advisor 651-697-8532
Beth Downes, Municipal Advisor 651-697-8514
Jen Chapman, Associate Municipal Advisor 651-697-8566
3001 Broadway St. NE
Suite 320
Minneapolis, MN 55413

BUILDING COMMUNITIES. IT'S WHAT WE DO.

Overall Budget Assumptions & Methodology

Using budgets and staffing levels for the 2025-2026 fiscal year as the base, consolidated projections are rolled forward with the following assumptions:

Enrollment

1. Projected based on grade progression ratios; calculates the historical percentage change in enrollment as students move from kindergarten to 1st grade, from 1st grade to 2nd grade, and so on through graduation.
2. 3 year weighted average method, places more importance on current year trends

Revenues

1. General education aid formula increases are based on January 1, 2025 inflation data from MDE
2. Levy and per pupil formulas are calculated based on projected enrollment and the consolidation study
3. 1% increase in Special Education Revenue
4. 2026-27 and 2027-28 one-time consolidation state aid
5. All others held consistent with fiscal year 2025-2026

Salary & Benefit Expenditures

1. 2% increase for steps as employees move through matrices
2. $10,000 annually for lane changes
3. 0% increase for new money on the matrices
4. 10% increase in health insurance premiums

Other Expenditures

1. 3% increase in utilities
2. 5% increase in property and liability insurance
3. 2% increase for purchased salary & benefits
4. All others held consistent with fiscal year 2025-2026

Overall Budget Assumptions & Methodology (Continued)

Other Reductions

1. Redundant Positions (Superintendent, etc.)
2. Bus Routes
3. Maintenance and utility savings for the unoccupied Carlton MS/HS Building
4. FTE based on building configuration

Attachments

Tables 1 Summarizes the consolidated estimated enrollment per grade level

Tables 2-4 Summarizes the budget projections through fiscal year 2030-2031 for each building configuration option

Tables 5-6 Summarizes the budget projections through fiscal year 2030-2031 for Carlton and Wrenshall individually

Table 1

Consolidated Carlton/Wrenshall Public School District

Historical Adjusted Average Daily Membership (ADM)

Grade	Actual 20-21	Actual 21-22	Actual 22-23	Actual 23-24	Actual 24-25	Budget 25-26	Projected 26-27	Projected 27-28	Projected 28-29	Projected 29-30	Projected 30-31
ECSE	6.00	4.60	4.05	13.64	9.83	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
PKG	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Kgt Hdp	8.48	4.36	5.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
KDG	58.54	52.90	37.18	38.66	53.00	38.00	38.00	46.00	43.00	39.00	45.00
1	57.94	62.93	54.30	44.65	43.08	55.00	40.54	40.54	49.07	45.87	41.60
2	44.31	61.63	62.56	48.93	45.27	41.00	53.02	39.08	39.08	47.30	44.22
3	57.51	49.20	56.41	61.67	54.08	42.00	40.86	52.84	38.94	38.94	47.14
4	49.34	55.62	48.31	50.33	62.35	49.00	39.43	38.36	49.60	36.56	36.56
5	59.93	47.73	44.51	44.46	47.78	59.00	46.21	37.18	36.17	46.77	34.47
6	59.88	63.19	39.89	47.14	43.99	44.00	57.04	44.67	35.94	34.97	45.22
7	59.56	55.02	56.84	36.78	46.59	35.00	38.76	50.25	39.35	31.66	30.80
8	61.19	60.21	51.32	52.49	43.21	44.00	35.62	39.45	51.14	40.05	32.22
9	84.50	57.00	53.53	50.41	49.76	56.00	49.62	40.17	44.48	57.67	45.16
10	46.34	80.53	53.84	49.93	49.94	47.00	53.65	47.53	38.48	42.62	55.24
11	50.36	41.77	58.74	44.03	48.84	49.00	44.79	51.12	45.29	36.67	40.61
12	47.09	47.82	37.02	57.22	43.27	48.00	48.09	43.95	50.17	44.45	35.98
	750.97	744.51	663.50	640.34	640.99	610.00	588.61	574.13	563.72	545.53	537.24

EHLERS
PUBLIC FINANCE ADVISORS

Table 2

OPTION A - Consolidated Carlton/Wrenshall Public School District

Five Year General Fund Budget Projection Summary

Definitions	Actual 2024-2025	Budget 2025-2026	Projected 2026-2027	% Chg	Projected 2027-2028	% Chg	Projected 2028-2029	% Chg	Projected 2029-2030	% Chg	Projected 2030-2031	% Chg
Revenue	$0	$10,230,453	$10,394,707	1.6%	$10,273,945	-1.2%	$10,129,067	-1.4%	$10,048,694	-0.8%	$10,036,823	-0.1%
Expenditures	$0	$11,182,590	$9,289,723	-16.9%	$9,583,001	3.1%	$9,780,620	2.1%	$10,079,129	3.1%	$10,308,118	2.3%
Revenue Over (Under) Expenditures	$0	($952,137)	$1,104,984		$690,944		$348,447		($30,434)		($271,295)	
Fund Balance	$1,554,635	$602,498	$1,707,482		$2,398,426		$2,746,873		$2,716,439		$2,445,143	
Assigned Fund Balance	$544,158	$575,521	$630,839		$660,725		$672,778		$662,642		$638,529	
Unassigned Fund Balance	$1,010,477	$26,977	$1,076,643		$1,737,702		$2,074,095		$2,053,797		$1,806,614	
Percent Unassigned	0.0%	0.2%	11.6%		18.1%		21.2%		20.4%		17.5%	
Unassigned Target Fund Balance %	0.0%	8.0%	8.0%		8.0%		8.0%		8.0%		8.0%	
Minimum Unassigned Fund Balance	$0	$894,607	$743,178		$766,640		$782,450		$806,330		$824,649	
Fund Balance Over (Under) Target	$1,010,477	($867,631)	$333,465		$971,061		$1,291,645		$1,247,466		$981,965	

	Actual 2024-2025	Budget 2025-2026	Projected 2026-2027	% Chg	Projected 2027-2028	% Chg	Projected 2028-2029	% Chg	Projected 2029-2030	% Chg	Projected 2030-2031	% Chg
Basic Funding Formula	$0	$7,481	$7,682	2.7%	$7,878	2.6%	$8,041	2.1%	$8,217	2.2%	$8,411	2.4%
Operating Referendum	$0	$0	$360	0.0%	$360	0.0%	$360	0.0%	$360	0.0%	$360	0.0%
Local Optional Revenue	$0	$724	$724	0.0%	$724	0.0%	$724	0.0%	$724	0.0%	$724	0.0%
Capital Projects Levy	$0	$0	$0	0.0%	$0	0.0%	$0	0.0%	$0	0.0%	$0	0.0%
Total Adj Pupil Units	697	666	643	-3.5%	629	-2.2%	618	-1.8%	596	-3.5%	585	-1.8%
Per Pupil Revenue	$0	$15,366	$16,173	5.3%	$16,344	1.1%	$16,403	0.4%	$16,856	2.8%	$17,150	1.7%
Per Pupil Expenditures	$0	$16,796	$14,454	-13.9%	$15,245	5.5%	$15,839	3.9%	$16,907	6.7%	$17,613	4.2%

EHLERS
PUBLIC FINANCE ADVISORS

Table 3

OPTION B - Consolidated Carlton/Wrenshall Public School District

Five Year General Fund Budget Projection Summary

Definitions	Actual 2024-2025	Budget 2025-2026	Projected 2026-2027	% Chg	Projected 2027-2028	% Chg	Projected 2028-2029	% Chg	Projected 2029-2030	% Chg	Projected 2030-2031	% Chg
Revenue	$0	$10,230,453	$10,408,917	1.7%	$10,309,533	-1.0%	$10,175,266	-1.3%	$10,085,448	-0.9%	$10,056,476	-0.3%
Expenditures	$0	$11,182,590	$9,443,723	-15.5%	$9,583,001	1.5%	$9,780,620	2.1%	$10,079,129	3.1%	$10,308,118	2.3%
Revenue Over (Under) Expenditures	$0	($952,137)	$965,194		$726,532		$394,646		$6,319		($251,642)	
Fund Balance	$1,554,635	$602,498	$1,567,692		$2,294,224		$2,688,870		$2,695,190		$2,443,548	
Assigned Fund Balance	$544,158	$575,521	$631,128		$661,740		$674,735		$665,345		$641,633	
Unassigned Fund Balance	$1,010,477	$26,977	$936,564		$1,632,485		$2,014,135		$2,029,845		$1,801,914	
Percent Unassigned	0.0%	0.2%	9.9%		17.0%		20.6%		20.1%		17.5%	
Unassigned Target Fund Balance %	0.0%	8.0%	8.0%		8.0%		8.0%		8.0%		8.0%	
Minimum Unassigned Fund Balance	$0	$894,607	$755,498		$766,640		$782,450		$806,330		$824,649	
Fund Balance Over (Under) Target	$1,010,477	($867,631)	$181,066		$865,845		$1,231,685		$1,223,514		$977,265	

	Actual 2024-2025	Budget 2025-2026	Projected 2026-2027	% Chg	Projected 2027-2028	% Chg	Projected 2028-2029	% Chg	Projected 2029-2030	% Chg	Projected 2030-2031	% Chg
Basic Funding Formula	$0	$7,481	$7,705	3.0%	$7,936	3.0%	$8,117	2.3%	$8,279	2.0%	$8,445	2.0%
Operating Referendum	$0	$0	$360	0.0%	$360	0.0%	$360	0.0%	$360	0.0%	$360	0.0%
Local Optional Revenue	$0	$724	$724	0.0%	$724	0.0%	$724	0.0%	$724	0.0%	$724	0.0%
Capital Projects Levy	$0	$0	$0	0.0%	$0	0.0%	$0	0.0%	$0	0.0%	$0	0.0%
Total Adj Pupil Units	697	666	643	-3.5%	629	-2.2%	618	-1.8%	596	-3.5%	585	-1.8%
Per Pupil Revenue	$0	$15,366	$16,195	5.4%	$16,400	1.3%	$16,478	0.5%	$16,918	2.7%	$17,183	1.6%
Per Pupil Expenditures	$0	$16,796	$14,694	-12.5%	$15,245	3.7%	$15,839	3.9%	$16,907	6.7%	$17,613	4.2%

EHLERS
PUBLIC FINANCE ADVISORS

Table 4

OPTION C - Consolidated Carlton/Wrenshall Public School District

Five Year General Fund Budget Projection Summary

Definitions	Actual 2024-2025	Budget 2025-2026	Projected 2026-2027	% Chg	Projected 2027-2028	% Chg	Projected 2028-2029	% Chg	Projected 2029-2030	% Chg	Projected 2030-2031	% Chg
Revenue	$0	$10,230,453	$10,408,917	1.7%	$10,309,533	-1.0%	$10,175,266	-1.3%	$10,085,448	-0.9%	$10,056,476	-0.3%
Expenditures	$0	$11,182,590	$9,646,723	-13.7%	$9,940,001	3.0%	$10,137,620	2.0%	$10,436,129	2.9%	$10,665,118	2.2%
Revenue Over (Under) Expenditures	$0	($952,137)	$762,194		$369,532		$37,646		($350,681)		($608,642)	
Fund Balance	$1,554,635	$602,498	$1,364,692		$1,734,224		$1,771,870		$1,421,190		$812,548	
Assigned Fund Balance	$544,158	$575,521	$631,128		$661,740		$674,735		$665,345		$641,633	
Unassigned Fund Balance	$1,010,477	$26,977	$733,564		$1,072,485		$1,097,135		$755,845		$170,914	
Percent Unassigned	0.0%	0.2%	7.6%		10.8%		10.8%		7.2%		1.6%	
Unassigned Target Fund Balance %	0.0%	8.0%	8.0%		8.0%		8.0%		8.0%		8.0%	
Minimum Unassigned Fund Balance	$0	$894,607	$771,738		$795,200		$811,010		$834,890		$853,209	
Fund Balance Over (Under) Target	$1,010,477	($867,631)	($38,174)		$277,285		$286,125		($79,046)		($682,295)	

	Actual 2024-2025	Budget 2025-2026	Projected 2026-2027	% Chg	Projected 2027-2028	% Chg	Projected 2028-2029	% Chg	Projected 2029-2030	% Chg	Projected 2030-2031	% Chg
Basic Funding Formula	$0	$7,481	$7,705	3.0%	$7,936	3.0%	$8,117	2.3%	$8,279	2.0%	$8,445	2.0%
Operating Referendum	$0	$0	$360	0.0%	$360	0.0%	$360	0.0%	$360	0.0%	$360	0.0%
Local Optional Revenue	$0	$724	$724	0.0%	$724	0.0%	$724	0.0%	$724	0.0%	$724	0.0%
Capital Projects Levy	$0	$0	$0	0.0%	$0	0.0%	$0	0.0%	$0	0.0%	$0	0.0%
Total Adj Pupil Units	697	666	643	-3.5%	629	-2.2%	618	-1.8%	596	-3.5%	585	-1.8%
Per Pupil Revenue	$0	$15,366	$16,195	5.4%	$16,400	1.3%	$16,478	0.5%	$16,918	2.7%	$17,183	1.6%
Per Pupil Expenditures	$0	$16,796	$15,009	-10.6%	$15,812	5.3%	$16,417	3.8%	$17,506	6.6%	$18,223	4.1%

Table 5

Carlton Public School District

Five Year General Fund Budget Projection Summary

Definitions	Actual 2024-2025	Budget 2025-2026	Projected 2026-2027	% Chg	Projected 2027-2028	% Chg	Projected 2028-2029	% Chg	Projected 2029-2030	% Chg	Projected 2030-2031	% Chg
Revenue	$5,776,060	$4,913,776	$4,731,084	-3.7%	$4,565,484	-3.5%	$4,368,696	-4.3%	$4,326,570	-1.0%	$4,227,190	-2.3%
Expenditures	$5,865,384	$5,691,394	$5,535,124	-2.7%	$5,512,937	-0.4%	$5,639,017	2.3%	$5,767,989	2.3%	$5,900,985	2.3%
Revenue Over (Under) Expenditures	($89,323)	($777,618)	($804,040)		($947,452)		($1,270,321)		($1,441,420)		($1,673,796)	
Fund Balance	$1,134,832	$357,214	($446,826)		($1,394,278)		($2,664,599)		($4,106,018)		($5,779,814)	
Assigned Fund Balance	$360,540	$380,358	$402,645		$409,324		$402,027		$390,619		$366,737	
Unassigned Fund Balance	$774,293	($23,144)	($849,471)		($1,803,602)		($3,066,626)		($4,496,637)		($6,146,551)	
Percent Unassigned	13.2%	-0.4%	-15.3%		-32.7%		-54.4%		-78.0%		-104.2%	
Unassigned Target Fund Balance %	8.0%	8.0%	8.0%		8.0%		8.0%		8.0%		8.0%	
Minimum Unassigned Fund Balance	$469,231	$455,312	$442,810		$441,035		$451,121		$461,439		$472,079	
Fund Balance Over (Under) Target	$305,062	($478,455)	($1,292,281)		($2,244,637)		($3,517,747)		($4,958,076)		($6,618,630)	

	Actual 2024-2025	Budget 2025-2026	Projected 2026-2027	% Chg	Projected 2027-2028	% Chg	Projected 2028-2029	% Chg	Projected 2029-2030	% Chg	Projected 2030-2031	% Chg
Basic Funding Formula	$7,281	$7,481	$7,705	3.0%	$7,936	3.0%	$8,117	2.3%	$8,279	2.0%	$8,445	2.0%
Operating Referendum	$813	$813	$813	0.0%	$813	0.0%	$813	0.0%	$813	0.0%	$813	0.0%
Local Optional Revenue	$724	$724	$724	0.0%	$724	0.0%	$724	0.0%	$724	0.0%	$724	0.0%
Capital Projects Levy	$0	$0	$0	0.0%	$0	0.0%	$0	0.0%	$0	0.0%	$0	0.0%
Total Adj Pupil Units	327	283	257	-9.4%	233	-9.3%	210	-9.6%	207	-1.7%	192	-7.0%
Per Pupil Revenue	$17,639	$17,351	$18,435	6.3%	$19,615	6.4%	$20,760	5.8%	$20,915	0.7%	$21,982	5.1%
Per Pupil Expenditures	$17,912	$20,097	$21,568	7.3%	$23,686	9.8%	$26,796	13.1%	$27,884	4.1%	$30,686	10.1%

Table 6

Wrenshall Public School District

Five Year General Fund Budget Projection Summary

Definitions	Actual 2024-2025	Budget 2025-2026	Projected 2026-2027	% Chg	Projected 2027-2028	% Chg	Projected 2028-2029	% Chg	Projected 2029-2030	% Chg	Projected 2030-2031	% Chg
Revenue	$5,650,075	$5,316,677	$5,438,516	2.3%	$5,455,044	0.3%	$5,496,537	0.8%	$5,504,543	0.1%	$5,551,204	0.8%
Expenditures	$5,701,392	$5,491,196	$5,505,033	0.3%	$5,489,842	-0.3%	$5,606,915	2.1%	$5,732,879	2.2%	$5,862,399	2.3%
Revenue Over (Under) Expenditures	($51,317)	($174,519)	($66,517)		($34,798)		($110,378)		($228,336)		($311,196)	
Fund Balance	$419,801	$245,282	$178,766		$143,968		$33,590		($194,746)		($505,942)	
Assigned Fund Balance	$183,617	$188,811	$201,345		$202,471		$201,915		$196,998		$190,079	
Unassigned Fund Balance	$236,185	$56,471	($22,579)		($58,503)		($168,325)		($391,744)		($696,022)	
Percent Unassigned	4.1%	1.0%	-0.4%		-1.1%		-3.0%		-6.8%		-11.9%	
Unassigned Target Fund Balance %	8.0%	8.0%	8.0%		8.0%		8.0%		8.0%		8.0%	
Minimum Unassigned Fund Balance	$456,111	$439,296	$440,403		$439,187		$448,553		$458,630		$468,992	
Fund Balance Over (Under) Target	($219,927)	($382,825)	($462,982)		($497,690)		($616,878)		($850,374)		($1,165,013)	

	Actual 2024-2025	Budget 2025-2026	Projected 2026-2027	% Chg	Projected 2027-2028	% Chg	Projected 2028-2029	% Chg	Projected 2029-2030	% Chg	Projected 2030-2031	% Chg
Basic Funding Formula	$7,281	$7,481	$7,705	3.0%	$7,936	3.0%	$8,117	2.3%	$8,279	2.0%	$8,445	2.0%
Operating Referendum	$0	$0	$0	0.0%	$0	0.0%	$0	0.0%	$0	0.0%	$0	0.0%
Local Optional Revenue	$724	$724	$724	0.0%	$724	0.0%	$724	0.0%	$724	0.0%	$724	0.0%
Capital Projects Levy	$0	$0	$0	0.0%	$0	0.0%	$0	0.0%	$0	0.0%	$0	0.0%
Total Adj Pupil Units	370	357	350	-1.8%	343	-2.2%	342	-0.2%	335	-1.9%	335	-0.1%
Per Pupil Revenue	$15,277	$14,901	$15,517	4.1%	$15,919	2.6%	$16,076	1.0%	$16,419	2.1%	$16,571	0.9%
Per Pupil Expenditures	$15,415	$15,390	$15,707	2.1%	$16,021	2.0%	$16,399	2.4%	$17,100	4.3%	$17,500	2.3%

OPTION A 10% Enrollment Increase - Consolidated Carlton/Wrenshall Public School District

Five Year General Fund Budget Projection Summary

Definitions	Actual 2024-2025	Budget 2025-2026	Projected 2026-2027	% Chg	Projected 2027-2028	% Chg	Projected 2028-2029	% Chg	Projected 2029-2030	% Chg	Projected 2030-2031	% Chg
Revenue	$0	$10,230,453	$10,695,802	4.5%	$10,961,486	2.5%	$11,112,573	1.4%	$11,240,126	1.1%	$11,594,416	3.2%
Expenditures	$0	$11,182,590	$9,289,723	-16.9%	$9,583,001	3.1%	$9,865,620	2.9%	$10,164,129	3.0%	$10,478,118	3.1%
Revenue Over (Under) Expenditures	$0	($952,137)	$1,406,079		$1,378,485		$1,246,953		$1,075,997		$1,116,298	
Fund Balance	$1,554,635	$602,498	$2,008,577		$3,387,062		$4,634,015		$5,710,012		$6,826,310	
Assigned Fund Balance	$544,158	$575,521	$644,772		$703,615		$756,952		$797,246		$837,145	
Unassigned Fund Balance	$1,010,477	$26,977	$1,363,804		$2,683,447		$3,877,063		$4,912,766		$5,989,165	
Percent Unassigned	0.0%	0.2%	14.7%		28.0%		39.3%		48.3%		57.2%	
Unassigned Target Fund Balance %	0.0%	8.0%	8.0%		8.0%		8.0%		8.0%		8.0%	
Minimum Unassigned Fund Balance	$0	$894,607	$743,178		$766,640		$789,250		$813,130		$838,249	
Fund Balance Over (Under) Target	$1,010,477	($867,631)	$620,626		$1,916,807		$3,087,814		$4,099,636		$5,150,916	

	Actual 2024-2025	Budget 2025-2026	Projected 2026-2027	% Chg	Projected 2027-2028	% Chg	Projected 2028-2029	% Chg	Projected 2029-2030	% Chg	Projected 2030-2031	% Chg
Basic Funding Formula	$0	$7,481	$7,682	2.7%	$7,878	2.6%	$8,041	2.1%	$8,217	2.2%	$8,411	2.4%
Operating Referendum	$0	$0	$360	0.0%	$360	0.0%	$360	0.0%	$360	0.0%	$360	0.0%
Local Optional Revenue	$0	$724	$724	0.0%	$724	0.0%	$724	0.0%	$724	0.0%	$724	0.0%
Capital Projects Levy	$0	$0	$0	0.0%	$0	0.0%	$0	0.0%	$0	0.0%	$0	0.0%
Total Adj Pupil Units	697	666	677	1.7%	699	3.3%	717	2.6%	717	-0.1%	737	2.8%
Per Pupil Revenue	$0	$15,366	$15,794	2.8%	$15,672	-0.8%	$15,490	-1.2%	$15,680	1.2%	$15,739	0.4%
Per Pupil Expenditures	$0	$16,796	$13,718	-18.3%	$13,701	-0.1%	$13,752	0.4%	$14,179	3.1%	$14,224	0.3%

Compare & Contrast Summary of the Three Grade-Configuration Models

(Using Original Text – Organized & Unified)

SCENARIO 1: PK–5 at South Terrace & 6–12 at Wrenshall

- Strengths / Advantages:
- - Creates developmentally appropriate environments (PK–5 and 6–12).
- - Strong academic focus by grade band; supports PLCs and alignment.
- - Age-appropriate SEL and behavioral systems.
- - Facilities better suited to each age group.
- - Clear PK–5 → 6–12 pathway.

- Challenges:
- - Transportation complexity for families with students in both buildings.
- - 6th graders share space with much older students.
- - Requires two administrative teams and some staff travel.
- - Possible community resistance and loss of “one community school” feel.
- - Higher operating costs with two active buildings.

SCENARIO 2: PK–6 at South Terrace & PK–12 at Wrenshall

- Strengths / Advantages:
- - Least disruptive; maintains current familiar structure.
- - Allows family choice between elementary experiences.
- - Smaller class sizes and personalized attention possible.
- - PK–6 allows early learning specialization.
- - High school retains TA status; Wrenshall field cheaper to upgrade.

- Challenges:
- - Highest operational cost; two full elementary programs.
- - Inefficient for staffing and collaboration (split specialists, substitutes).
- - Harder to balance academic/behavioral class composition.
- - Curriculum alignment and PLCs weakened across two elementary sites.
- - Both buildings may need updates for full PK–6 support.

SCENARIO 3: South Terrace Middle School (6–8) & Wrenshall PK–5 and 9–12

- Strengths / Advantages:
- - Aligns with national best practices for grade bands.
- - Stronger SEL and behavioral supports tailored to middle schoolers.
- - Departmentalization and expanded MS programming (STEM, arts, advisory).

- - Stronger PLCs and clearer curriculum alignment.
- - Better age-appropriate supervision and facility use.

- Challenges:
- - Transportation coordination required for families and buses.
- - Staff redistribution may require adjustment.
- - Some shared programs (band/choir) may require creative scheduling.
- - Buildings may need updates for grade-band appropriateness.
- - Community concerns about losing a uni-campus identity.

Comparison Overview

Category	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
Elementary Structure	Single PK–5	Two PK–6 buildings	Single PK–5
Middle School Structure	6th with 7–12	5–6 at ST; 7–12 at W	Standalone 6–8
High School Structure	9–12	9–12	9–12
Instructional Efficiency	High	Lowest	High
Operational Cost	Moderate	Highest	Moderate
Community Impact	Two campuses	Least disruptive	Multi-campus, clear identity
Staffing Efficiency	Moderate	Lowest	Highest
Facilities Needs	ST secure entry upgrades	Both buildings need updates	Updates for PK–5 & MS
Best Features	Strong instructional alignment	Family choice	Strong middle school model
Biggest Drawbacks	6th grade with HS students	High cost, inefficiency	Coordination across campuses

Overall Takeaways

• Scenario 1: Best for long-term instructional alignment and program expansion, but requires careful transition planning and addresses developmental appropriateness for 6th graders.

• Scenario 2: Best for short-term stability; not fiscally efficient long-term; reduces collaboration and increases staffing inefficiency.

• Scenario 3: Best for developmental appropriateness and strong middle school programming; requires logistics planning and facility updates.

Executive Summary

Topic: Grade Configuration and Co-Location of Students with Grades 9–12
Audience: Community and Public Meetings
Purpose: To summarize education research regarding whether it is more beneficial to locate **PreK–4 students** or **grades 6–8 students** in the same school building or campus as **grades 9–12**.

Key Takeaway

Based on education research and common best practices, **it is generally more beneficial to locate grades 6–8 with grades 9–12 than to locate PreK–4 students with grades 9–12**.

This conclusion is grounded in research on **student development, school transitions, safety, school climate, and instructional environments**.

Why Grades 6–8 with 9–12 Is Supported by Research

- **Developmental Alignment**
  Middle school and high school students are closer in age, maturity, and learning needs. This allows for consistent expectations, behavior standards, and school culture.
- **Smoother Academic Transitions**
  Research shows that fewer school transitions improve attendance, engagement, and academic outcomes. A 6–12 configuration reduces disruption and helps students successfully transition into high school.
- **Improved School Climate and Safety**
  When students are developmentally similar, supervision is simpler and expectations are clearer. Younger secondary students benefit from appropriate near-peer role models.
- **Compatible Facility Use**
  Grades 6–12 require similar instructional spaces such as science labs, career and technical education areas, and activity spaces, making shared facilities more effective.

Why PreK–4 with 9–12 Is Generally Not Recommended by Research

- **Developmental Mismatch**
  Early learners have very different emotional, social, and instructional needs than adolescents. Large age gaps make it difficult to maintain age-appropriate environments.

- **Increased Supervision and Safety Concerns**
  Locating very young students with teenagers requires extensive separation, additional staffing, and careful scheduling to manage safety and exposure concerns.
- **Limited Educational Benefit for Younger Students**
  Research does not show academic advantages for PreK–4 students from daily proximity to high school students. Positive cross-age interactions can occur without shared buildings.
- **Facility Design Challenges**
  Buildings must serve both play-based early learning and advanced secondary instruction, often resulting in compromises that limit effectiveness for both groups.

What Research Indicates Overall

- **Grades 6–8 are developmentally well-suited to share space with grades 9–12**.
- **PreK–4 students benefit most from dedicated elementary environments** designed specifically for early learning.
- Configurations combining PreK–4 with 9–12 are typically driven by **financial or facility constraints**, not by instructional or developmental best practices.

Bottom Line for the Community

From a research perspective, **locating grades 6–8 with grades 9–12 better supports student learning, safety, and school climate than locating PreK–4 students with grades 9–12**.

This executive summary is intended to provide a clear, research-based framework for public discussion and long-range planning.

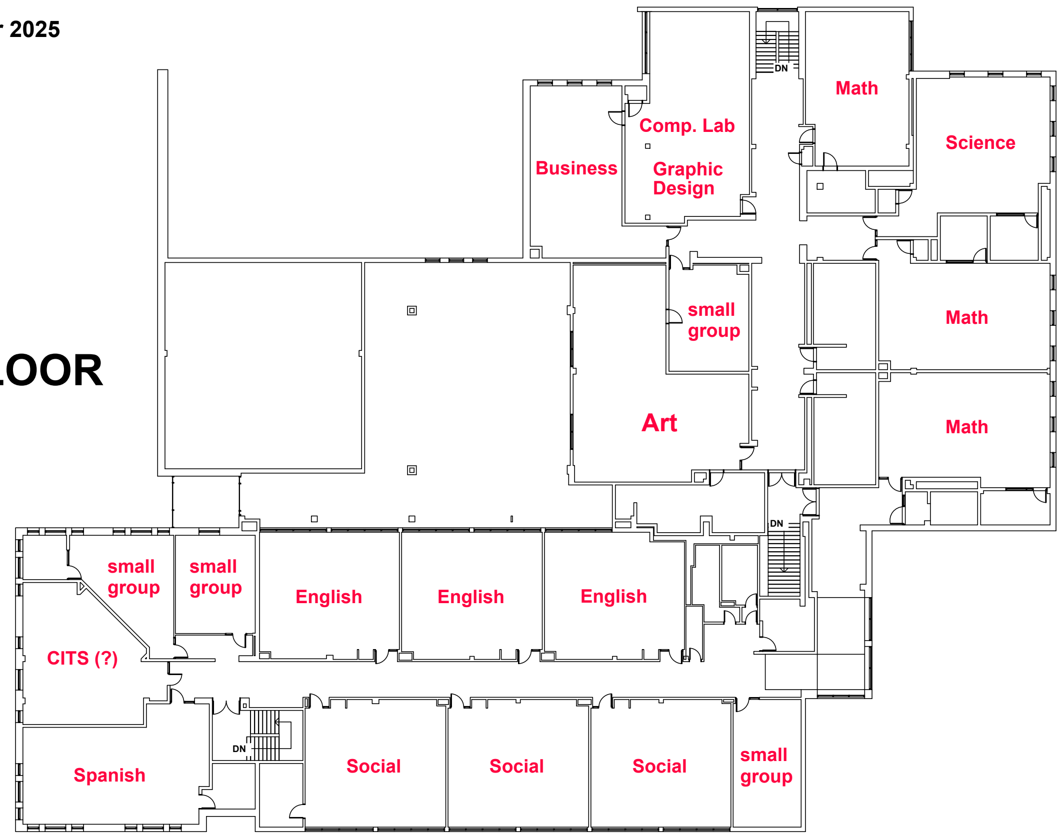
WRENSHALL CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL
PROPOSED 6-12 CONFIGURATION

Option A:
Pk-5 S. Terrace
6-12 Wrenshall

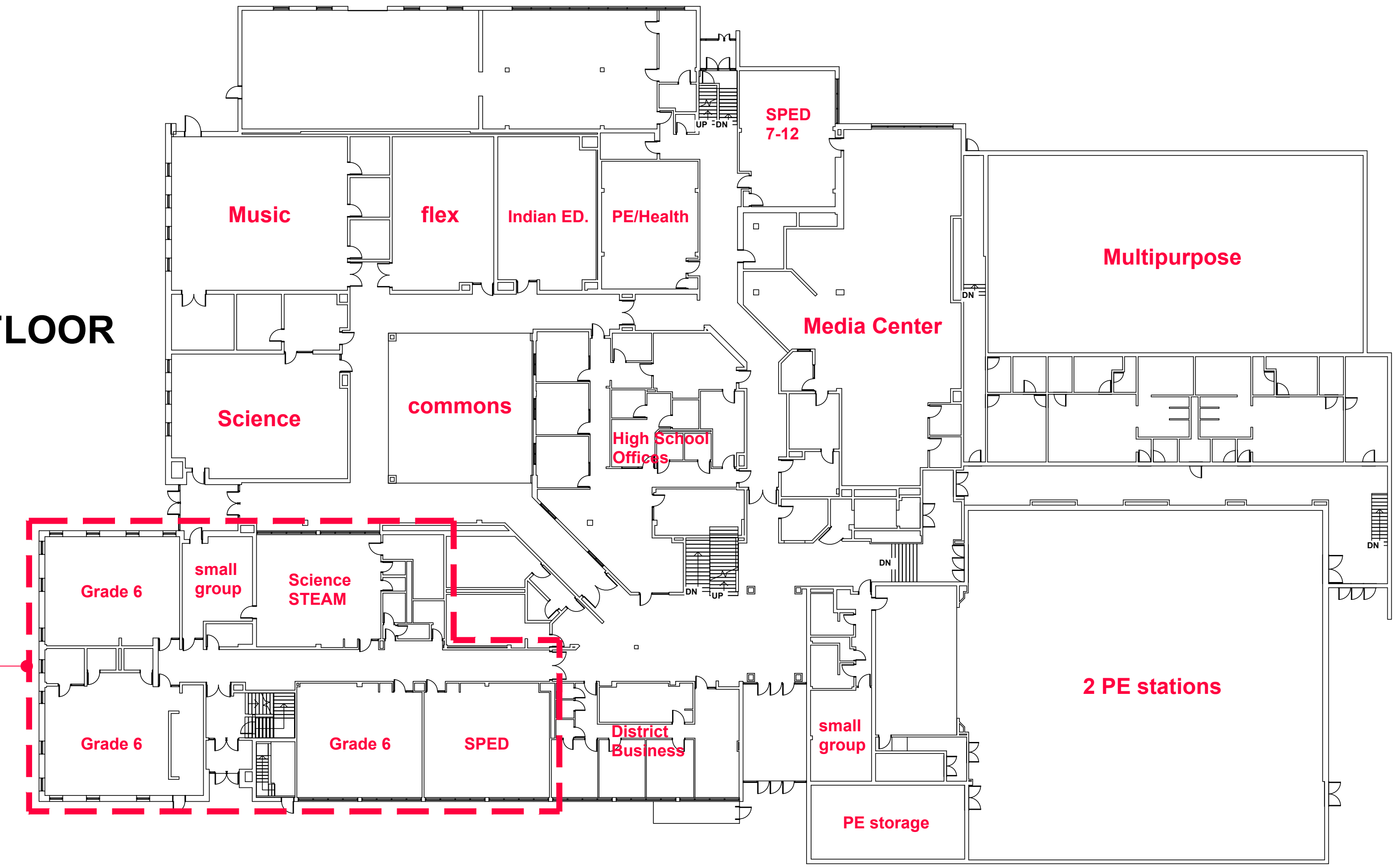
WiDSETH

15 December 2025

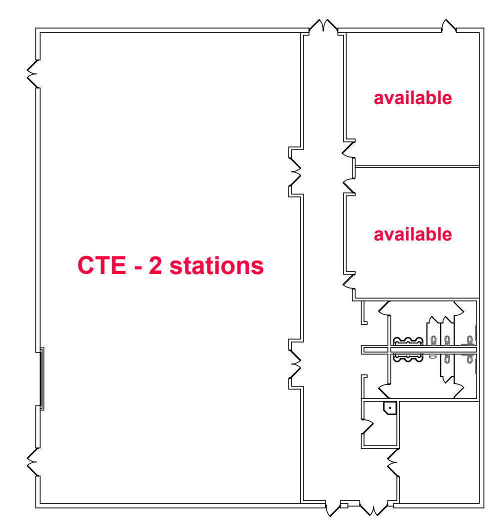
2nd FLOOR



1st FLOOR



BASEMENT



REC BUILDING

SOUTH TERRACE CONSOLIDATED ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PROPOSED PK-5 CONFIGURATION

Option A:
Pk-5 S. Terrace
6-12 Wrenshall

WIDSETH

15 December 2025

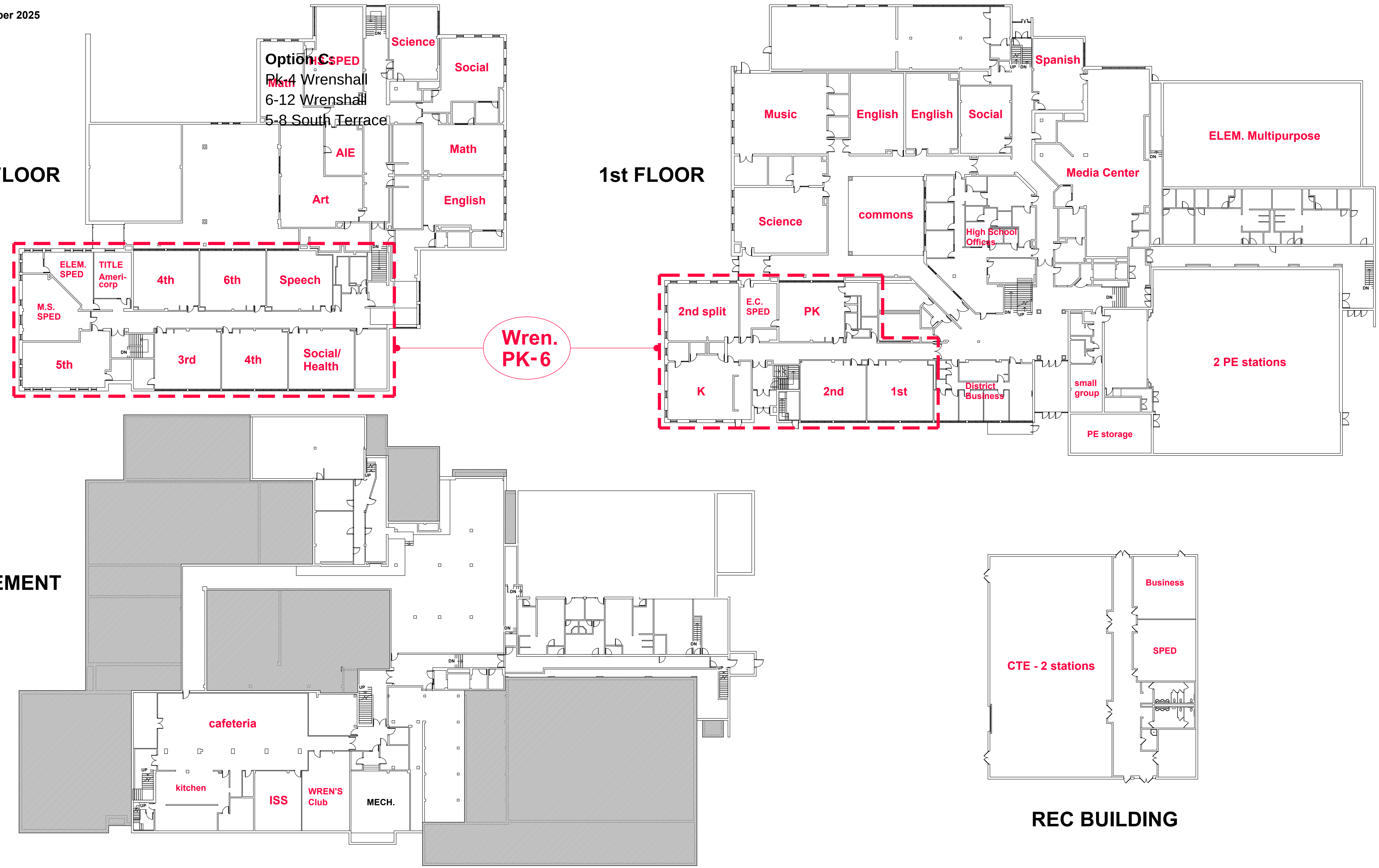
MAIN FLOOR

WRENSHALL CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL
PROPOSED TEMPORARY PK6 & 7-12 CONFIGURATION

Option B: - Transistion Year
PK-6 Wrenshall Only
7-12 Carlton/Wrenshall
PK-6 South Terrace - Carlton Only

WiDSETH

18 December 2025

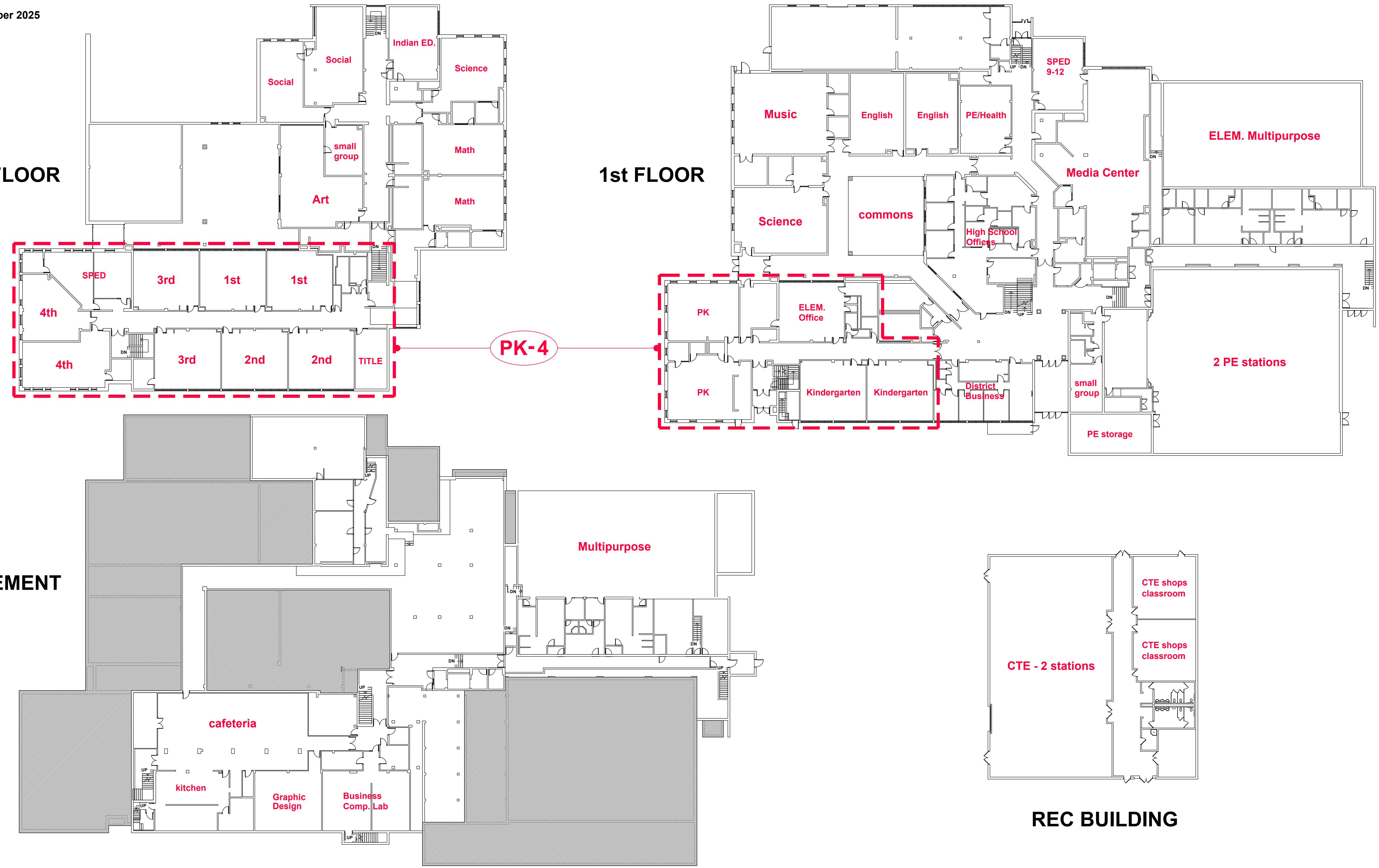


WRENSHALL CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL
PROPOSED PK-4 & 9-12 CONFIGURATION

Option C:
Pk-4 Wrenshall
6-12 Wrenshall
5-8 South Terrace

WIDSETH

16 December 2025

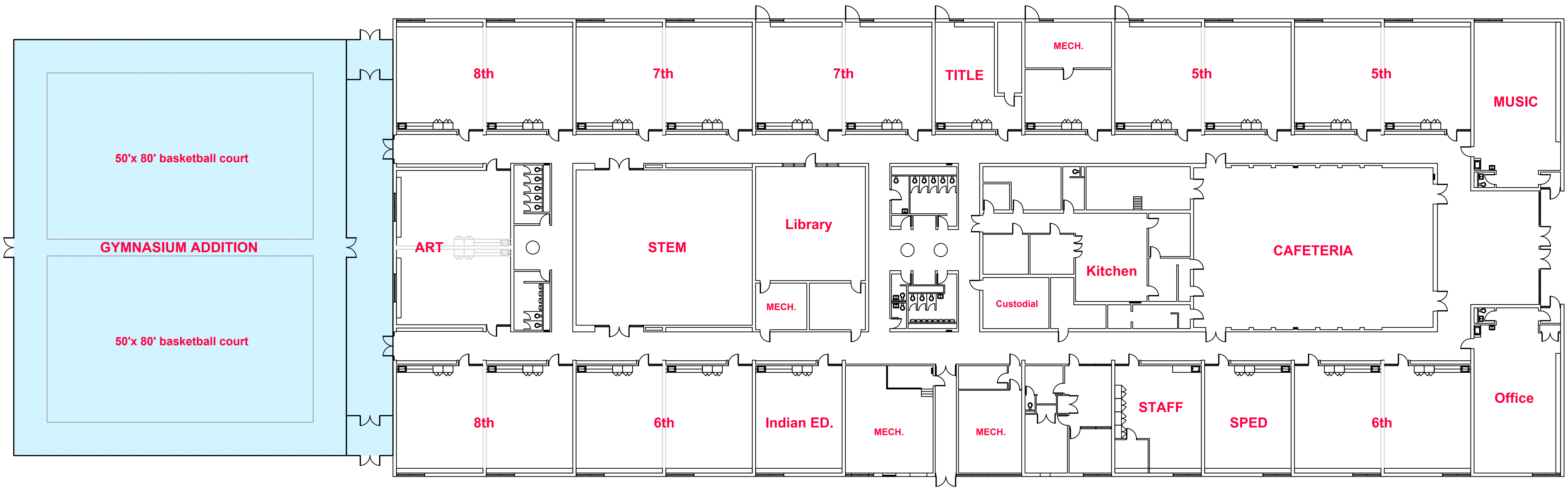


SOUTH TERRACE CONSOLIDATED ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Proposed Grades 5-8 Middle School

WiDSETH

17 December 2025

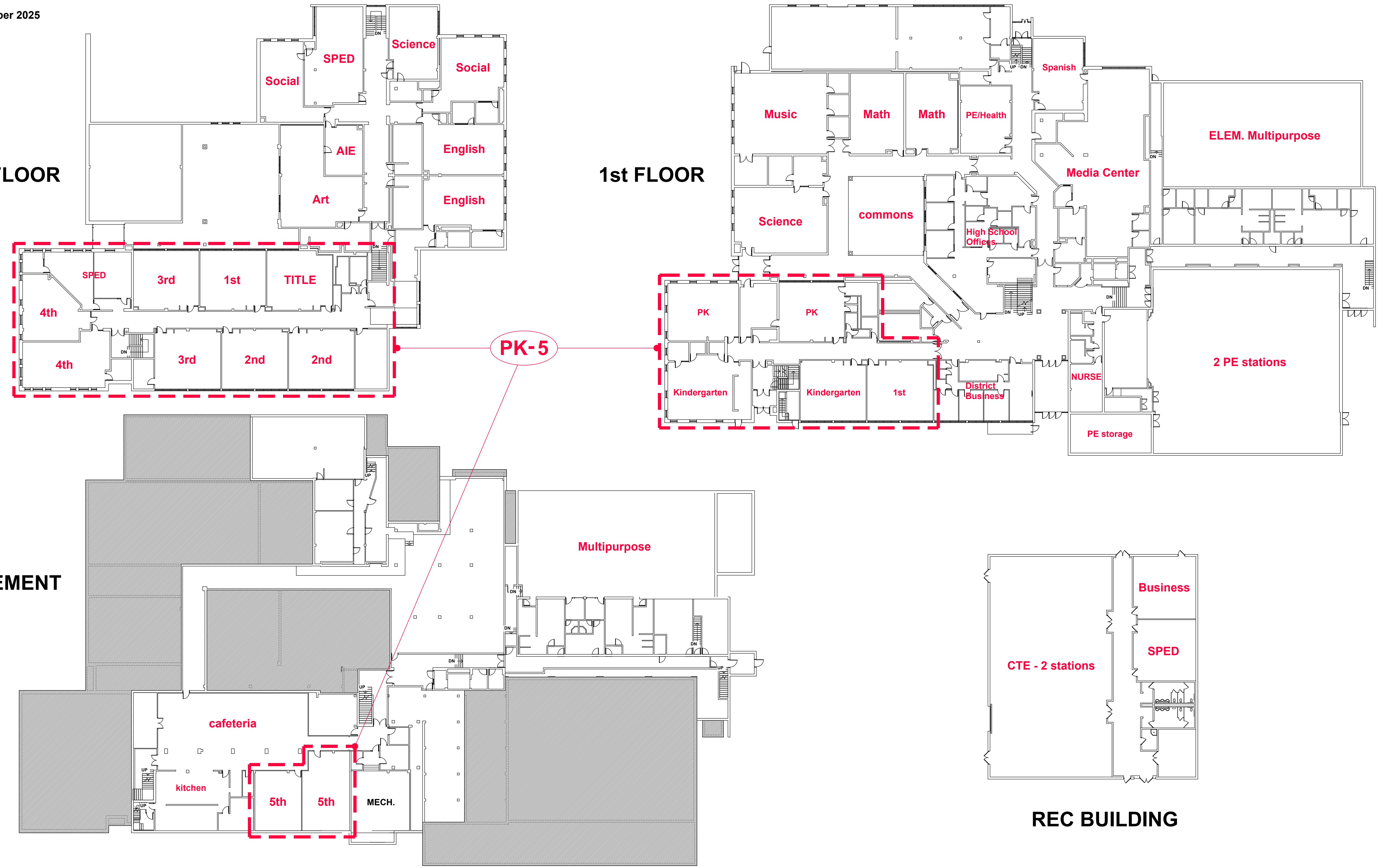
Option C:
Pk-4 Wrenshall
6-12 Wrenshall
5-8 South Terrace



WRENSHALL CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL
PROPOSED PK5 & 9-12 CONFIGURATION

WIDSETH

17 December 2025



What are your favorite three consolidated district names ideas?

237 responses

December 22, 2025

Minnesota Department of Education
Chris Kubesh, Education Finance Specialist
1500 Highway 36 West
Roseville, Minnesota 55113

Minnesota Secretary of State
Paul Linnell, Director of Elections
100 Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard
St Paul, MN 55155

Mr. Kubesh and Mr. Linnell,

After reviewing your feedback on our consolidation resolution, we would like to revise our board transition plan. On December 22, 2025, the School Boards of Wrenshall Public School (ISD 100) and Carlton Public School (ISD 93) agreed to the following board reduction plan. Wrenshall and Carlton both currently have boards consisting of 6 members.

July 1, 2026 - Districts Consolidate - The board will reduce to seven (7) members through resignations. The resignations will be as follows:

- Carlton
  - 1 resignation from a member with a term expiring in 2026
  - 2 resignations from members with a term expiring in 2028
- Wrenshall
  - 1 resignation from a member with a term expiring in 2026
  - 1 resignation from a member with a term expiring in 2028

After these resignations, the election cycle will be as follows:

- Fall 2026 Election: Four (4) At Large School Board Seats
- Fall 2028 Election: Three (3) At Large School Board Seats

All school board elections for the consolidated district will be for at large seats.

This document should serve as an addendum to our formal submission to the Minnesota Department of Education dated October 13th, 2025.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to either superintendent.

Sincerely,

Frank Schill
Superintendent

Mark Messman
Superintendent

STATE OF MINNESOTA
Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State
Steve Simon

To: Mark Messman, Superintendent, Carlton Public Schools
Frank Schill, Superintendent, Wrenshall Area Public Schools
Cc: Chris Kubesh, Minnesota Department of Education
Kevin DeVriendt, Carlton County Auditor

On October 16, 2025, the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State received a copy of the orderly reduction plan for board representation in the proposed consolidation of the Carlton and the Wrenshall School Districts. I have reviewed the plan and provide the following comments:

The plan proposes to elect three members from each pre-existing school district along existing election boundaries.

- The plan should specify whether this statement applies only to the transition period and the board would subsequently move to at large seats, or if the consolidated school district intends to maintain election districts following the completion of the transition.
- If the plan proposes to maintain election districts following the completion of the transition, the districts must meet the requirements for election district boundaries in Minn. Stat. 205A.12 subd. 4 – *"Each proposed election district must be as equal in population as practicable and must be composed of compact, contiguous territory."*
    - The current populations would not provide for an equal split of 3 seats from each of the current school district boundaries.
    - The consolidated school district would need to follow redistricting guidelines and consider whether adjustments for population are necessary during each decennial redistricting.

The plan provides for a reduction of board members from 12 to 6, as follows:

- Reduction to 8 board members following the resignation of 2 Carlton School Board members and 2 Wrenshall School Board members prior to July 1, 2026.
- Reduction to 6 board members following the resignation of 1 additional Carlton School Board member and 1 additional Wrenshall School Board member prior to July 1, 2027.
    - The plan should specify whether these resignations are for members with terms expiring in 2027 or 2029.

- The plan should detail which seats would be up for election in 2026, for terms expiring in 2031.
- The plan should detail which seats would be up for election in 2028, for terms expiring in 2033.
- The plan should ensure that there is even staggering of terms, so that three seats are up for election at each general election.

The attached Exhibit A provides an example of a similar recent school district consolidation reduction plan, detailing when each seat would be up for election and clarifying that the consolidated school district would move to at-large board member seats following the completion of the transition.

The Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State would welcome the opportunity to further discuss these comments and/or provide further review after receiving additional detail and clarification on the reduction plan from Carlton and Wrenshall School Districts.

Sincerely,

Paul Linnell
Director of Elections

Exhibit A

October 30, 2019

Minnesota Department of Education
Tom Melcher, Director
Division of Program Finance
1500 Highway 36 West
Roseville, MN 55113

Mr. Melcher,

The School Boards of Eveleth-Gilbert Public Schools (ISD 2154) and Virginia Public Schools (ISD 706) have agreed to the following board consolidation plan. Currently Eveleth-Gilbert has a seven (7) member board and Virginia has a six (6) member board.

July 1, 2020 - Districts consolidate - all current thirteen (13) members serve on the new board.
November 2020 - Expiring terms: EG four (4) members, Virginia three (3) members.
- November election would call for one (1) new EG member, one (1) new Virginia member, and one (1) at large member

January 1, 2021 - Nine (9) member board, four (4) EG members, four (4) Virginia members, one (1) at large.
November 2022 - Expiring terms: EG three (3) members, Virginia three (3) members
- November election would call for two (2) new EG members, two (2) new Virginia members.

January 1, 2023 - Seven (7) member board, three (3) EG members, three (3) Virginia members, one (1) at large.
November 2025 - All future elections will be at large members

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to give either superintendent a call at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Dr. Noel Schmidt
Superintendent

Jeff Carey
Superintendent