4. Assessment

4.1 Data Driven Process

Any successful strategy is founded on good information. To that end, MKThink spent months gathering and assessing qualitative and quantitative data points.
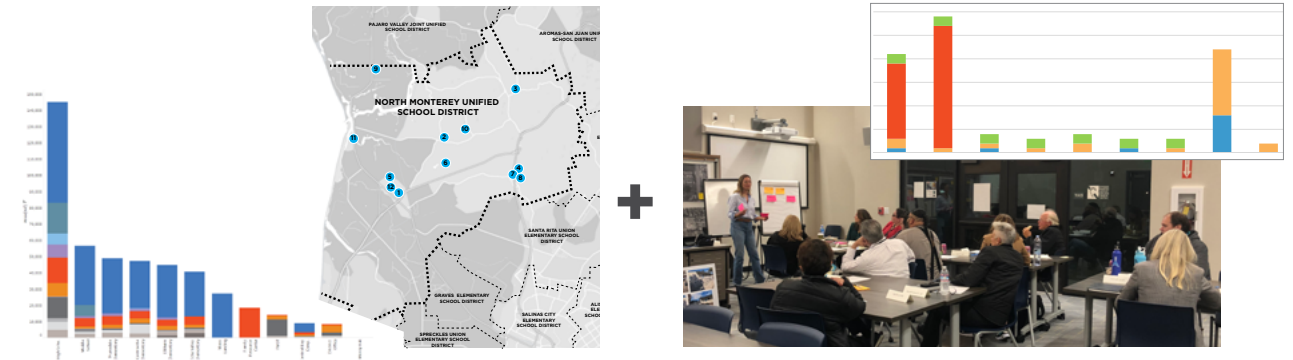
Quantitative Data establishes the baseline for the current state of the district. We collected data from existing sources, including data about enrollment and space utilization and organized it into a database which several of the analytic visuals are extracted from.

Qualitative Data balances the factual with insights into the perception of space and how space serves its users. We employed focus groups, an online survey, perception mapping and site visits to gather qualitative information about the sites, uses and needs.
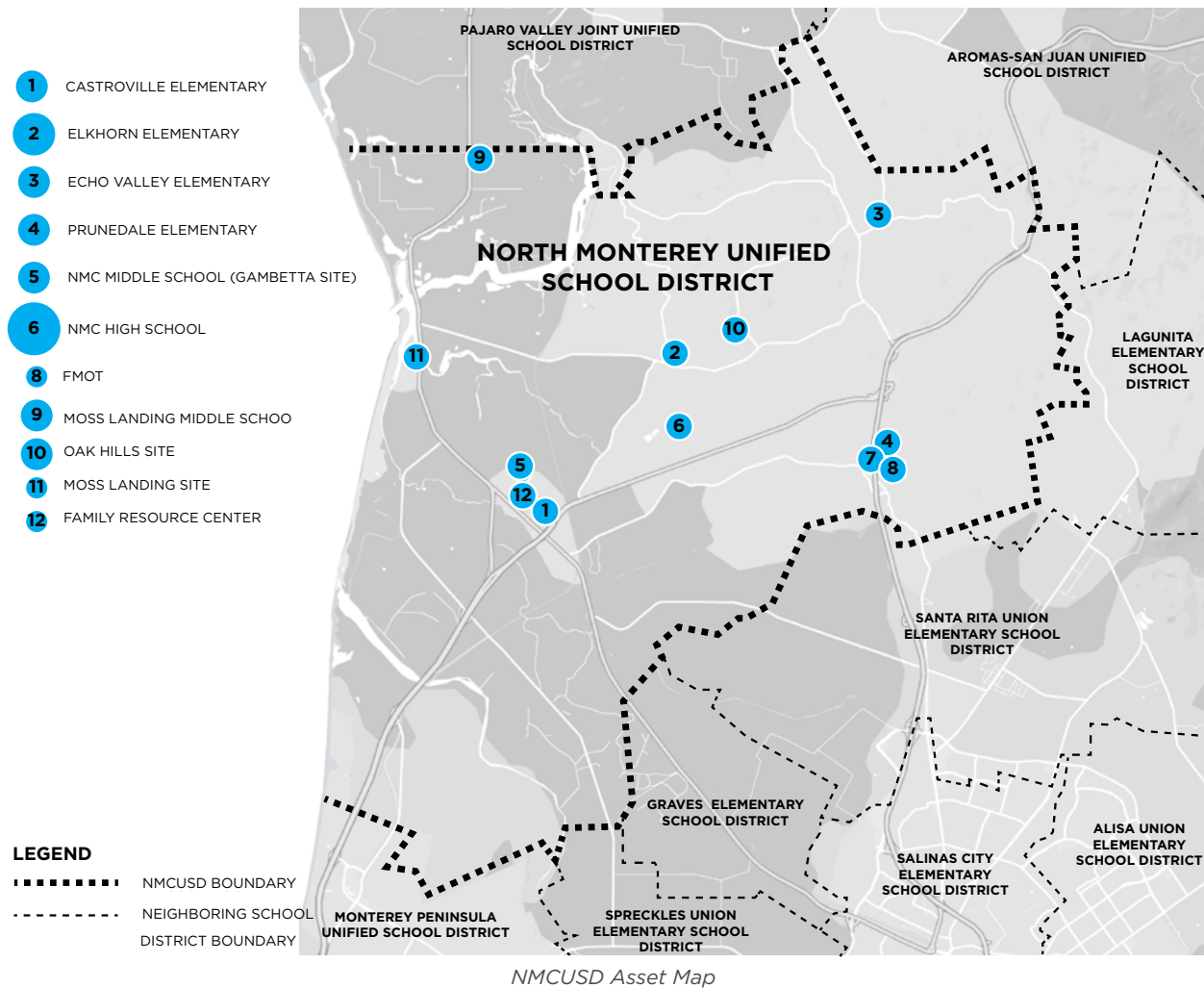
Considered in isolation from one another, quantitative and qualitative data may fall short. But evaluated in conjunction, they offer insights that might otherwise stay hidden. When assessing the data, we evaluated where qualitative and quantitative findings aligned, but also evaluated misalignment.

4.2 Key Insights

The resulting insights helped identify the need for the district. Top among them are:

- The District is operating at or over capacity, yet its facilities are inflexible to accommodate change

- Aging facilities cause high operational costs, diverting funds away from the core mission and community benefit

- School sites are lacking in 'curb appeal' or vibrant image and identity, causing a negative perception among the community

- The District lacks sufficient science and STEAM spaces, and suffers from over-crowded multi-purpose and gathering spaces

- Select sites (Gambetta) are mismatched for student age and curriculum

- While rich in land, the district is under-equipped with outdoor learning, gathering and recreation space

4.3 District Overview

1 CASTROVILLE ELEMENTARY
2 ELKHORN ELEMENTARY
3 ECHO VALLEY ELEMENTARY
4 PRUNEDALE ELEMENTARY
5 NMC MIDDLE SCHOOL (GAMBETTA SITE)
6 NMC HIGH SCHOOL
8 FMOT
9 MOSS LANDING MIDDLE SCHOO
10 OAK HILLS SITE
11 MOSS LANDING SITE
12 FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

LEGEND

┄┄┄┄ NMCUSD BOUNDARY

╌╌╌╌ NEIGHBORING SCHOOL
          DISTRICT BOUNDARY

NMCUSD Asset Map

The District is comprised of 12 sites:
- 4 Elementary, 1 Middle and 1 High School
- 1 Continuation High School and Center for Independent Study
- 1 District Office
- 1 Facilities and Maintenance Yard
- 2 Family Resource Center
- 2 currently unused sites

The typical district facility is a single story, single loaded classroom building with an average age of 59.8 years. 75 portable buildings across the district serve as classrooms, offices, or physical education changing rooms.
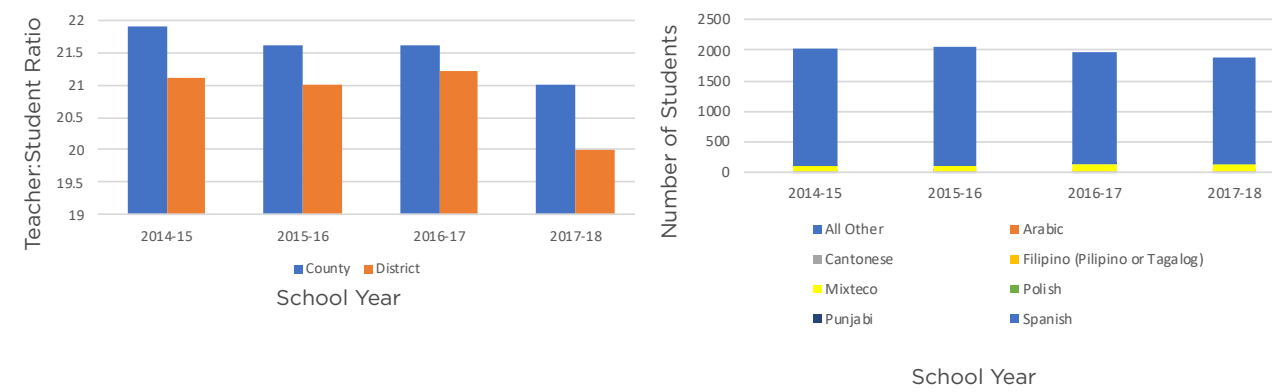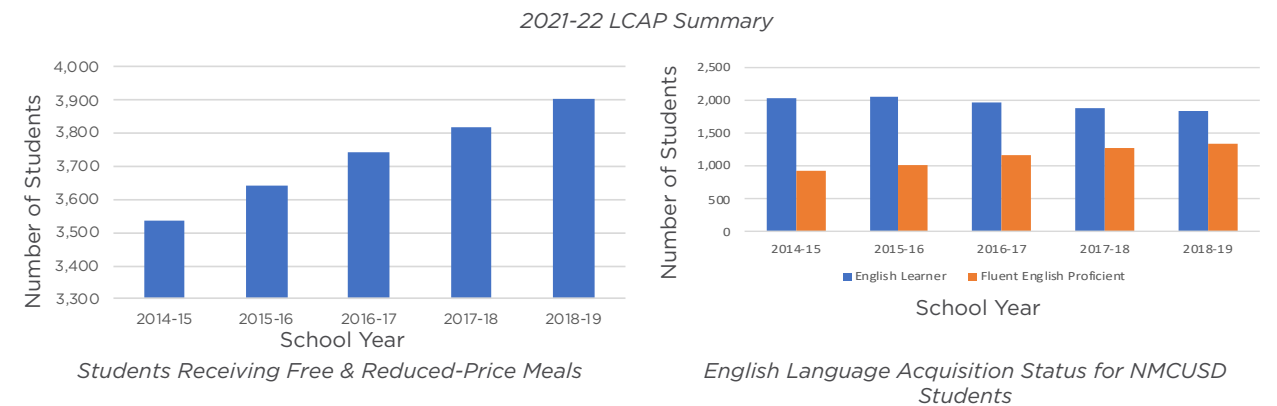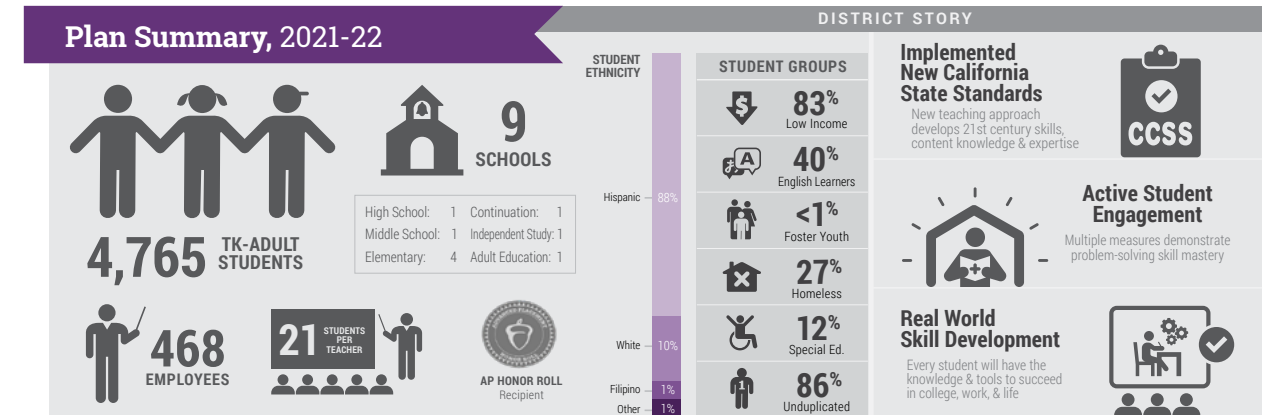
The District's aging facilities are not set up to offer the flexibility and variety of spaces for a 21st century learning environment.

The existing Middle School (Gambetta) site was originally designed for elementary school students. This has resulted in lack of facilities like STEM classrooms and sports tracks, undersized and over-capacity spaces like the library and the multipurpose room.

For the three currently unused District sites - Moss Landing Middle School, former District office and a vacant site in the Oak Hills community - the District continues to incur operating costs and fees associated with owning undeveloped land. Zoning and water service restrictions limit options for development or sale of some sites.

4.4 Demographics

Of the 4,765 TK (Transitional Kindergarden) through 12th Grade students in the District, 83% come from low income families, 87% are considered high needs, 40% are English Learners, 27% are homeless, and 12% require Special Education services.

2021-22 LCAP Summary

Students Receiving Free & Reduced-Price Meals

English Language Acquisition Status for NMCUSD Students

Per Pupil Ratio - Teachers to Students in NMCUSD and County-wide

Languages of English Learners of Students in NMCUSD

Source: Data collected by the California Department of Education (CDE) through the Ed Data Education Data Partnership (https://www.ed-data.org/district/Monterey/North-Monterey-County-Unified)

4.5 Programs

NMCUSD is a full-service district providing Wrap Around services to the community through programs hosted at its school sites. Programs include:

- Nurture Educate Socialize Thrive Program (NEST)
- STEAM Programs
- Infant and Toddler Early Childhood Education Program
- Young Adult Transition Program
- Special Education Programs
- Career and Technical Education Programs
- Bilingual Spanish Transition Program
- Reading is Fundamental Program
- Free Breakfast and Lunch Program
- Afterschool Enrichment Supper Program
- Youth Cinema Project
- After School Co-Ed Athletic Program
- Intramural Sports Lunch Program
- Lunch Clubs
- After School Dance Club
- Migrant Ed After School Program
- GIRLS Inc
- Mental Health Counseling

Students at the Spelling Bee Competition

The Middle School Band Practice

4.6 Career Technical Education

North Monterey County High School provides a range of career technical education (CTE) courses to prepare students for employment opportunities after graduation. Course pathways include: auto service, hospitality, medical assisting, admin of justice, fire, welding. engineering/robotics, multimedia art, music production, and sports medicine. CTE courses require dedicated spaces like auto-shops or student kitchens to provide opportunities for certifications and skills to matriculate to outside programs.


High School Auto Shop

4.7 Community Partnerships

To enrich the lives of students and community members, NMCUSD provides services in partnership with community organizations like Monterey County Free Libraries, Hartnell College, North Monterey County Recreation and Park District, Elkhorn Slough Foundation, United Way, the Blue Zones Project, Community Human Services, and the League of United Latin American Citizens. The District is a member of the North Monterey County Community Alliance which targets early childhood and Middle School success, and college and career readiness.

Future Students at Hartnell College

4.8 Negative District Perceptions Impact Enrollment
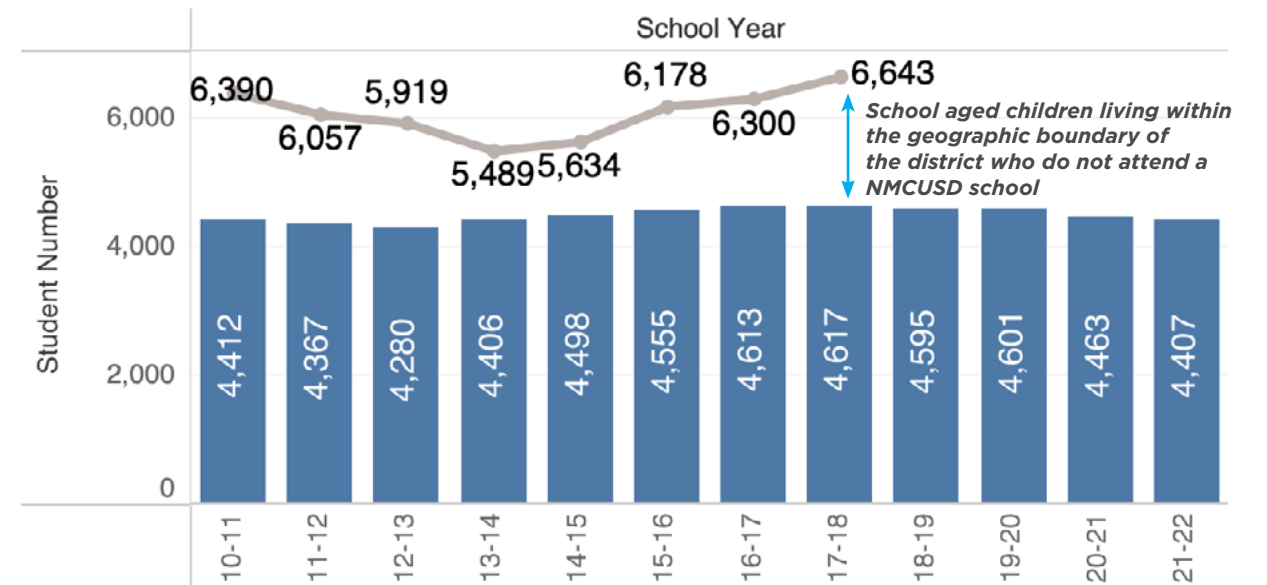
North Monterey County Unified School District Student Age Population & Enrollment Trends

The core challenge facing the NMCUSD school district is its inability to fully capture and serve the eligible student population living within its catchment area. Between 2010 and 2022, student enrollment increased to a peak in 2018 and has since reduced gradually. As of 2018, only 69.5% of all school aged children living within the geographic boundaries of the District attended a school operated by NMCUSD, down from 81% just a few years prior.

This discrepancy corroborates anecdotal findings that parents are choosing other school districts over NMCUSD, in part because there is general community distrust in the district's ability to steward its facilities.

Poor "curb appeal" and high use of portables for instruction have led to negative perceptions within the community about the district and its schools.

This finding provides the impetus for district leadership to re-evaluate how it meets its high goals within a challenging funding environment for new construction.

*"poor **signage** and **branding**"*

*"high number of **portables, affects image** of school"*

*"**portables** have to go"*

4.10 Unforeseen Enrollment Changes Demand Flexibility

The 2016 Demographic study by School Works projects that the District's student population will grow by 4.53% by the 2022-23 school year. Such projections are contingent upon a range of difficult to predict factors like proposed new residential development, territory transfer to or from other districts or job growth within the district.

As the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on district enrollment over the next five years are not yet fully understood, a revised study would be prudent once a clearer economic picture emerges. The Facilities Master Plan assumes a continuation of the current trend line and plans forward with the understanding that solutions must retain the flexibility required to adapt to a longer term change in demographic trends.

Castroville Elementary School

School student population change:

Projected   ('08 - '24):   7.7%
(per 2016 Demographic Study)

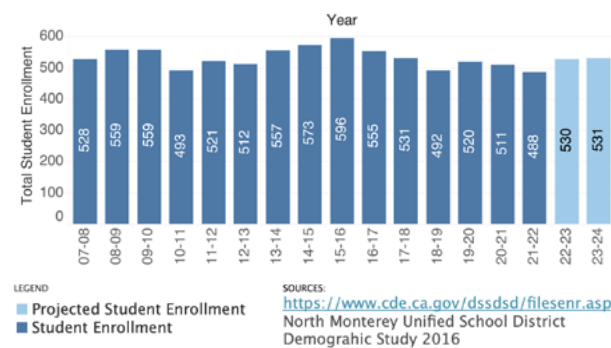Actual   ('08 - '22):   4.4%
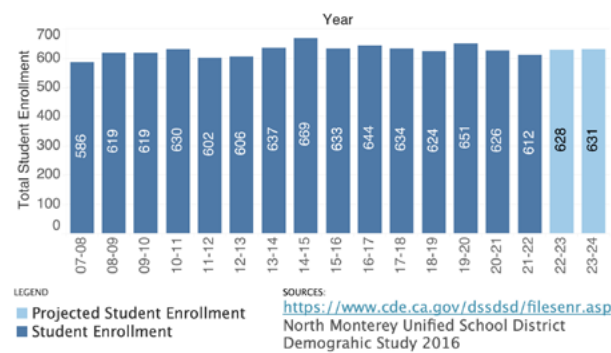
Echo Valley Elementary School

School student population change:

Projected   ('08 - '24):   0.5%
(per 2016 Demographic Study)

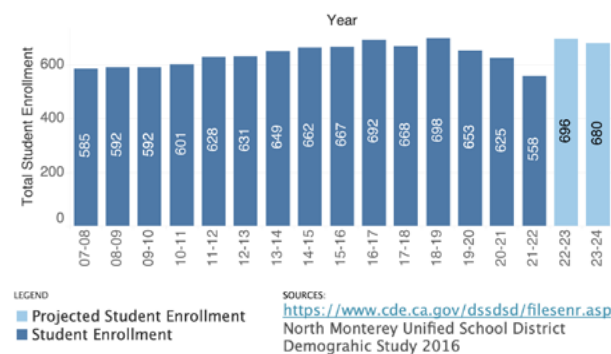Actual   ('08 - '22):   -7%

Elkhorn Elementary School

School student population change:

Projected   ('08 - '24):   16%
(per 2016 Demographic Study)

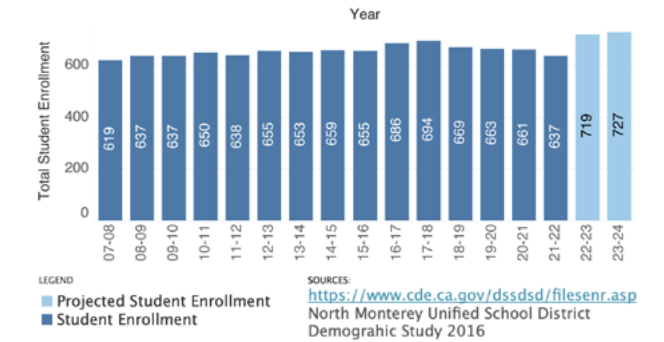Actual   ('08 - '22):   -4.6%

Prunedale Elementary School

School student population change:

Projected   ('08 - '24):   17.6%
(per 2016 Demographic Study)

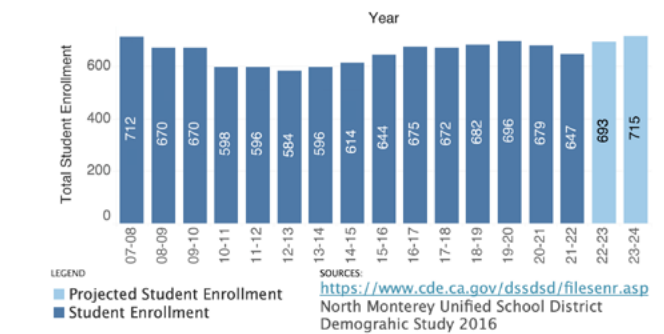Actual   ('08 - '22):   2%

North Monterey County Middle School

School student population change:

Projected   ('08 - '24):   0.45%
(per 2016 Demographic Study)

Actual   ('08 - '22):   -9.1%

Central Bay High School
Due to the unique nature of the programs offered at Central Bay High School, the change in enrollment is a reflection of policy. The High School also hosts the Adult Education Program and will host the Center for Independent Study.
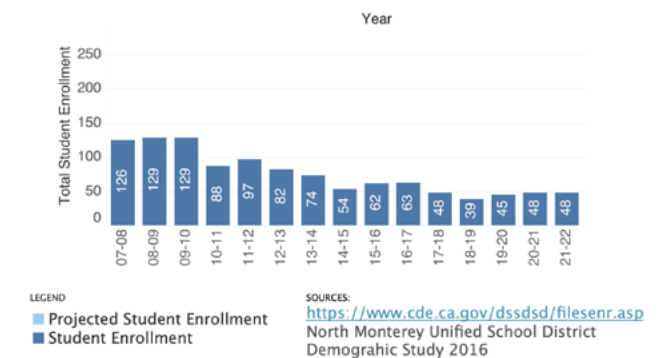
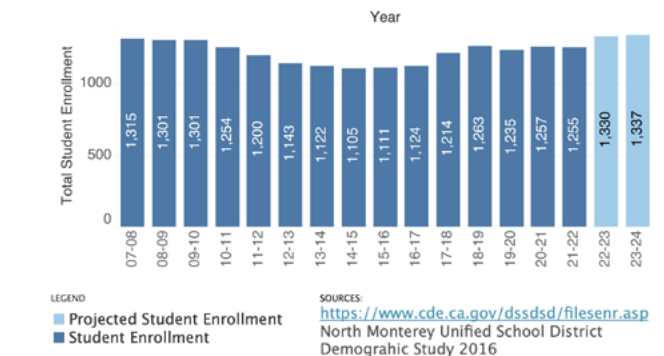### North Monterey County High School

School student population change:

Projected   ('08 - '24):   1.7%
(per 2016 Demographic Study)

Actual   ('08 - '22):   -4.3%

4.11 Space Distribution Across Facilities/Properties

Site Name	Net Square Feet (SF)	Student Population	Room Count	Net SF per Student
Castroville Elementary	47,278		109	76
Echo Valley Elementary	40,625		76	83
Elkhorn Elementary	44,779		104	64
Prunedale Elementary	48,765		104	73
NMC Middle School	56,372		100	82
Central Bay High School	8,840		31	N/A
NMC High School	145,015		293	117
Family Resource Center	18,295		1	-
Centralized Services	4,320		-	-
Moss Landing Middle School	27,000		30	-
Oak Hills	0		0	-

4.12 Outdoor Space Has Potential for Image Enhancement and Curricular Integration

While the building facilities are aging, the district is land-rich. Opportunities to capitalize on acres of outdoor space for integration with the learning program exist.

## 4.13 Space Flow and Operations a Concern for Some Schools

Operations issues are related to facilities operations and maintenance.

Flow issues relate to the movement of people at the site and/or within the district

Several, but not all schools raised concerns with operations and flow. Concerns were most prevalent in relation to:

- Bus drop-off / pick-up safety
- *"hard to monitor **multiple entry points**"*
- *"**flow** of students to portables"*
- *"need **accessibility upgrades**"*

4.14 Space Quantity and Quality Are Top Concerns Across District

The chart is shaped to point towards categories that are issues.
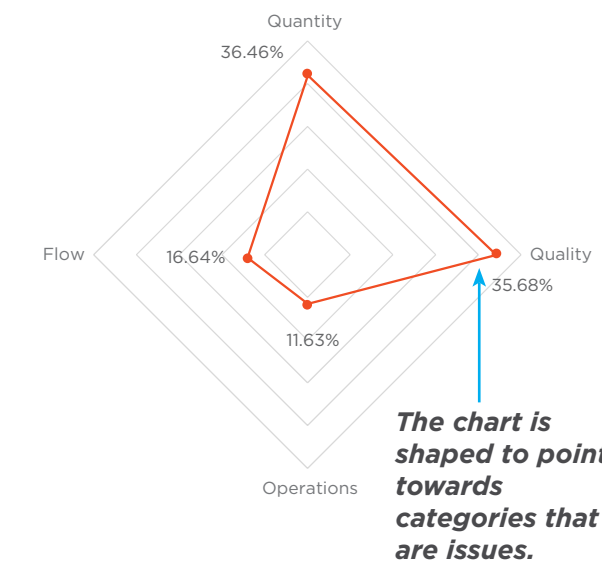
District wide assessment of issues across campus

Quantity issues relate to the amount of resources or space.

Quality issues relate to the adequacy of a particular space to serve program needs.

Concerns with quantity and quality of space issues were prevalent at all schools. Key recurring elements supported by site observation are:

- *"**inadequate multipurpose rooms**"*
- *"**cramped** classrooms"*
- *"not **enough space** during **lunch**"*
- *"acoustics between classrooms"*
- *"need space for **new curriculum**"*

4.15 Classroom Space Demands

Classrooms make up 55.4% of total space use across the district.
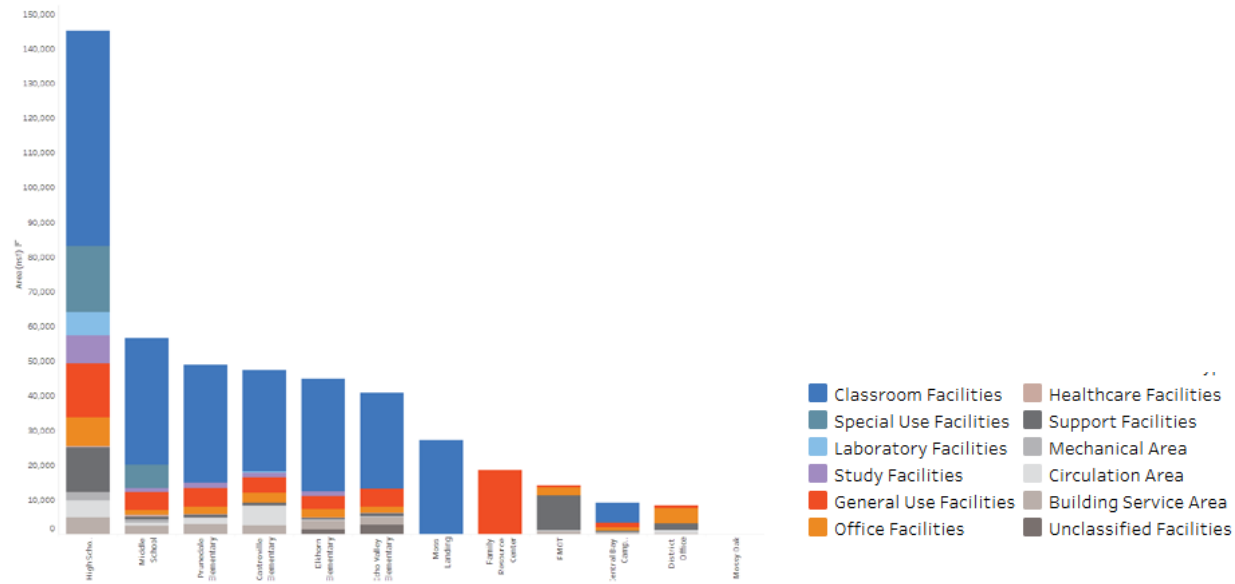
While at an aggregate level the space is sufficient to accommodate existing programs, when evaluated site by site, some sites are over capacity while some are under capacity. There is little flexibility to accommodate change in enrollment, curriculum and / or programs offered.
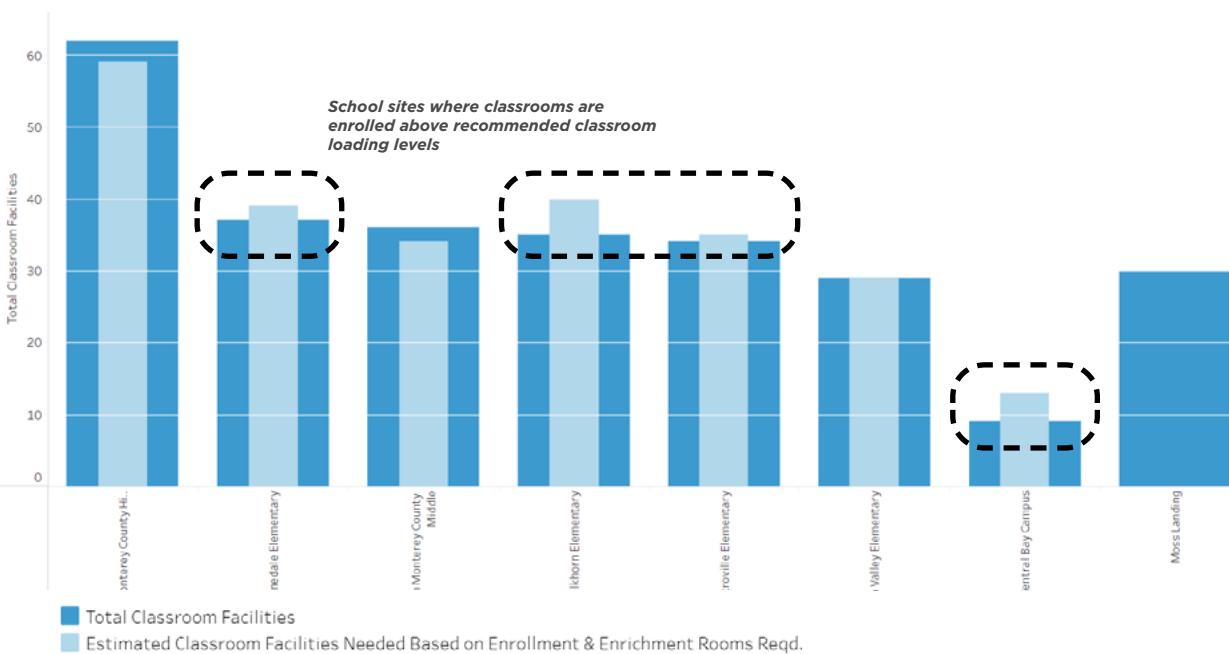
4.16 Assessment by Space Type

Active Learning

Classrooms:

- The District's classrooms are adequate for current operations, but have inadequate flexibility and technology to support active learning pedagogies.
- Classrooms in the district are equipped with varying levels of technology and are furnished with systems that only allow for limited variations in configurations.

Echo Valley Elementary School Classroom

Labs and Specialty Spaces:

- At the Middle School and High School levels, significant upgrades are required to support STEM programs.
- The science buildings in the High School are not permitted to have gas connections due to building code restrictions.
- Due to their configuration, existing facilities at both the High Schools do not have the capacity to be upgraded in a cost-effective manner.

High School Science Lab

Portables:

- The district owns 75 portable buildings out of which 54 are used as classrooms. These aging portable units result in high operating costs. Additionally, they lack the infrastructure needed to provide a 21st century learning environment for students.

Classroom Portables

Wellness

Playgrounds

- The elementary schools are in need of upgraded play structures as well as sports fields capable of hosting junior leagues.

Example of underutilized playground

Sports Fields

- The Middle School lacks adequate sports facilities appropriate for Middle School students like sports tracks, lockers and changing rooms.
- Previous bond measures have supported new sports facilities at the High School which are liked by students and community at large.

Gyms and Locker Rooms

- The Middle School lacks adequate sports facilities appropriate for Middle School students like sports tracks, lockers and changing rooms.

NMCHS School Track and Field Facilities

Campus Landscape

- The District has sufficient open spaces to create opportunities for landscaped areas with local flora and student gardens to be used by the students and teachers for instruction, formal and informal gathering & play. However, the district is not currently outfitted to take advantage of this potential.

Example of Unused Open Area

Gathering Spaces

Site	Multipurpose Room Size
NMC High School	8,189 SF
Prunedale Elementary	3,858 SF
NMC Middle School	3,771 SF
Castroville Elementary	2,593 SF
Echo Valley Elementary	2,380 SF
Elkhorn Elementary	2,345 SF
Central Bay High School	603 SF

Dining/Food Service

- Multipurpose rooms are undersized for current use across the district.
- Use for multiple functions is impaired by multiple scheduled lunch periods.
- Severe overcrowding of multipurpose rooms during lunch service has resulted in the elementary schools switching to multiple lunch services starting as early as 10:30am. This puts stress on custodial staff in ensuring clean environments for students in subsequent lunch services as well as staff required to ensure smooth operations.
- The Middle School and High School have implemented "Grab and Go" lanes to improve serving efficiency and is considered to be a successful program.

Elkhorn Elementary School Multipurpose Room

Assembly and Gathering

- The lack of indoor social spaces pushes students outside, which could meet district goals if appropriate outdoor furniture is provided.
- The Middle School hosts a variety or rallies and events at the gymnasium or the basketball courts but lack the amenities to fully fulfill the needs of such events.

"Grab and Go" Lane at Middle School

Performing Arts

- The recently repainted Forum at the High School is widely used for formal and informal gathering events but the layout and the lack of audio visual infrastructure prevents it from being used as a performing arts venue.

High School Multipurpose Room - The Forum

4.17 Campus Circulation and Flow

Wayfinding and Circulation

- Lack of adequate signage makes it hard for parent and visitors to find administrative offices at many sites in the district.

Digital Sign at Castroville Elementary

Entry Experience and Identity

- The Elementary Schools and Middle Schools suffer from the absence of 'curb appeal.' Lack of branding, negative experiences in the parking area due to lack of space and security build an impression among parents and visitors that does disservice to the amenities offered by the school district.
- The School District has tasked each school to develop its own brand and will require additional spaces for signage and murals.

Pick-Up and Drop-Off

- Some sites result in parents having to park outside school property during pick-up and drop-off resulting in safety issues.

4.18 Operations

Food Services and Prep

- Currently the district has a central kitchen at the High School from where food is delivered to other sites. The District is exploring the possibility of setting up another food preparation kitchen at the Middle School to improve operations.

Utilities Infrastructure

- The District should invest in and maintain adequate utility infrastructure for school operations.

Maintenance/ Warehousing

- The Facilities, Maintenance, Operations and Transportation Yard presently is used as parking for the buses when not in use as well the work center for the facilities team.

4.19 Opportunities for Improvement by Site

Based on the Insights, opportunities were identified and grouped in connection to each guiding principle for each of the school sites in the District. See Appendix B for detailed opportunities identified on each site.