

Rainbow Community School Preschool Program Expansion: Funding for architectural and design services

FY2021 Early Childhood Grants

Rainbow Community School

Mrs. Renee Owen
574 Haywood Rd.
Asheville, NC 28806

west.willmore@rainbowlearning.org
O: 9318083722
M: 8287756202

Ms. Medora West Willmore

574 Haywood Rd.
Asheville, NC 28806

west.willmore@rainbowlearning.org
O: 9318083722
M: 9318083722

Application Form

INSTRUCTIONS

Buncombe County requests proposals for community based projects to enhance outcomes for young children and their families in our community. Grants made through the Early Childhood Education and Development Fund will be focused on access to quality early childhood care and education.

Please refer to the Grant Guidelines published on the Early Childhood Grants website at buncombecounty.org/grants for complete information about the grant program, including: Purpose; Funding; Eligibility; Timeline; Grant writing workshop; Review process; Awards; and more.

Applications are due by 5:00 pm on February 14, 2020.

BASIC INFORMATION

BASIC INFORMATION – Before completing the application, please tell us a little about the request.

Project Name*

Rainbow Community School Preschool Program Expansion: Funding for architectural and design services

Strategy*

Recognizing that some projects will use more than one strategy, select the strategy that most closely applies to this project:

Creating new classrooms to serve more children in early care and education settings

Funding Request*

How much funding is this project requesting for FY2021?

\$100,000.00

Grant Guidelines*

Have you read and understand the information presented in the FY2021 Grant Guidelines for Early Childhood Grants (Grant Guidelines)?

If no, please contact County staff to request assistance: Rachael Nygaard, (828) 250-6536 or rachael.nygaard@buncombecounty.org.

Yes

APPLICATION

APPLICATION QUESTIONS – Responses to these questions will be scored by the grant committee. Each question is worth 10% of the final score.

Organization*

Give a brief history, including date of founding, focus, services, and record of success.

Rainbow Community School (RCS) is a preschool-8th grade, non-profit, private school in Asheville that serves 215 students. RCS was established as a child-centered, holistic preschool called Rainbow Mountain Children's School (RMCS) in 1977. Its founders, Dr. Aostre Johnson, Ashrita Laird and Anne Craig built a unique early childhood program based on whole child development in five learning domains: mental, emotional, social, physical, and spiritual. In the early 1980s, under Laird's leadership, the school added a K-4th grade program. In 1994, RCS created the Omega Program to serve middle-school children. Director at the time, John Johnson, introduced two educational approaches to support the needs of older students: the Multiple Intelligences framework of Harvard Professor Howard Gardner and essential learning behaviors. In 1997, Jane Stanhope took over as director and supervised a campus expansion. John Shackleton assumed directorship in 2004 and helped to restructure the program to support the school's rapid growth. In 2007 current director, Renee Owen began her tenure by leading the faculty in curriculum mapping in all subjects and grades and helped to transition the school to a systems-based Dynamic Governance model. During her tenure she made significant improvements in teacher salaries and doubled the campus size and student population. Recently she led the school through strategic planning that yielded a revised mission statement, 12 guiding principles and the addition of two more learning domains into the holistic model, the Creative and Natural Domain. Community reinvestment and engagement also became a strong focus and RMCS changed its name to reflect that. RCS also ramped up its service learning and community service through more than 20 partnerships with regional nonprofits and businesses. RCS also open sources its curriculum and regularly hosts free, public events. RCS is also gaining positive public attention as a hub for social justice and equity.

Need for the Project*

What is the main issue this project is established to address? What data or qualitative factors/stories are available to show that need?

Decades of research has proven that high quality early childhood learning programs provide short and long term health and education benefits for children. The birth to age eight development window, or first 2,000 days, is considered a critical learning period, specifically for brain development. Participation in these early learning settings is linked to later successes in school and in adulthood. It is widely accepted that children who attend preschool are better prepared than those who do not.

Access to and affordability of early childhood programs has increasingly become a barrier and locally we are experiencing a shortage. For example, two-thirds of children between the ages of zero and four in Buncombe Co. are not enrolled in a licensed early childhood program. To that end, creation and/or expansion of early learning programs is critical.

RCS has been in the business of early childhood education for over 40 years. Decades of experience has yielded a successful program implemented by highly trained teachers. All child care programs must meet a set of minimum health and safety standards to operate in North Carolina, earning them one star. Programs that hold themselves to higher standards may participate in an extensive ECERS (Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale) rating process. When a program meets the highest standards in each of seven

subcategories it may earn the highest rating possible, the prestigious 5 Stars. The preschool program at RCS received its 5th star in 2008 and has worked vigilantly to maintain its since.

As a high quality, 5-star program, RCS would like to make its program more accessible to a larger population and wishes to expand its holistic model beyond its current 36 student program to include an additional classroom for toddlers, a preschool after school classroom, and an updated outdoor learning space. RCS would like to partner with Buncombe Co. and the Early Childhood and Development Committee to make this happen.

Project*

Explain the project and how it will work. Include the overall purpose and any models or evidence-based practices that will be included. What specific activities and milestones are included in the project plan?

The new preschool will be relocated to 22 Allen Street; this is currently a residence owned by RCS and is adjacent to the current Omega Middle School campus. Preschool expansion will require demolition of this existing residence. The construction costs for the expansion project will be raised through the school's development efforts, but RCS is looking for financial support for the first step of the first phase, which includes funding for architectural and design services. The scope of the architectural and design work includes structural engineering services (inspections, reports, and recommendations), a schematic design (existing and new layout and demolition plans), design development, construction documents (structural, civil, electrical, acoustical, plumbing, interior and landscape design), and construction administration. Traditionally, a design phase accounts for approximately 10% of the total construction costs or \$200-\$250 per square foot; this equates to a funding request of \$100,000. Please see the "Other" section for an attachment of the preliminary sketches for Phase 1 Campus Map, Phase 2 Campus Map, and the Existing Conditions Map.

People Served*

Who will be served by this project? Include demographics for children and families served, workforce, and/or any other relevant groups.

RCS aims to connect with families at the beginning of their children's learning journey and build a strong foundation as well as a lasting relationship to ensure long-term academic, social, and emotional success. As a 5-star preschool, RCS offers high-quality programming. With an expanded preschool program, partially funded through this grant, RCS can provide broader services to a larger population. Currently, the early childhood program (preschool-1st grade) is serving a total of 72 students and their families. The tuition-based program is made more accessible through tuition assistance, opportunity scholarships, and state subsidized vouchers. These efforts support 25-30% of all RCS early childhood students. For example, in 2017-18 RCS provided financial aid for 13 preschool-1st graders, enrolled five on the opportunity scholarship, and enrolled two preschoolers with vouchers. In 2018-2019, RCS provided financial aid for 17 preschool-1st graders, enrolled four on the opportunity scholarships, and one preschooler on a voucher. This year, RCS has provided financial aid for 11 preschool-1st graders, enrolled eight on the opportunity scholarship, and two preschoolers on vouchers. Expanding the preschool program will also allow RCS to accept more preschoolers with vouchers and matriculate kindergarteners and 1st graders that qualify for the opportunity scholarship. RCS sees the critical role that our early childhood educators play in the learning journey of its students and works hard to support the well-being and professional development of its teachers. RCS is a Living Wage certified employer and offers a variety of benefits for our teachers. For instance, RCS has improved salaries to match county and city schools, integrated an annual raise, provides a health insurance stipend, offers tuition remission for all employees, and funds professional development opportunities. A program expansion would yield a workforce expansion offering these benefits to more teachers.

Results*

What results do you hope to achieve with this project? Be specific about how much impact the project will have in line with the goals of the fund, and how many people will be served.

For projects requesting funding for slots, also please include:

- Total new slots created
- Total slots maintained
- # of Subsidy slots created
- # of Subsidy slots maintained
- # of teachers/staff positions created
- # of teachers/staff positions maintained

This expansion project is aligned with the goals of the Early Childhood and Development fund. It meets the goal of increasing availability of high-quality early childhood care and addresses affordability for programs. It also aligns with Goal 8 laid out in the North Carolina Early Childhood Action Plan. Goal 8 highlights High-Quality Early Learning: Babies, toddlers and young children across North Carolina will have access to high-quality opportunities to engage in early learning.

As far as people served, the RCS preschool program expansion will maintain two preschool classrooms accommodating 36 total students ages three-five while continuing to employ four full time teachers and one part-time aid. The expansion will also add a new toddler classroom to accommodate 12, two-three year olds and yield two additional full time teachers and two part time after school teachers. The project will also add an after school classroom that will accommodate 18, three-five after school students and maintain two part-time after school teaching staff. RCS will continue to subsidize 25-30% of its early childhood student population, as stated in the previous section. However, continuing an upward trend in these numbers is a strategic goal of the school.

Evaluation*

How will you know you have succeeded? Explain the project evaluation process, including specific measures that will be tracked.

Indicators of project success are timeline specific. In order for RCS to create new classrooms that serve more children and employ more educators, it must raise the funds required for Phase 1 of the larger, multi-phase capital project. Ultimately, next steps are dependent upon securing funding for architectural and design services. The faster we can acquire funds, the sooner we can expand our 5-Star program. Once these funds are secured the facilities planning committee will set a timeline and associated action steps.

Equity*

Describe your approach to racial and socio-economic equity, both inside and outside the organization. What are some specific examples of practices that are in place or to be put in place with this project?

In 2015, RCS revised its mission to include social justice and hired an Equity Director. Since then, RCS's commitment to equity has been at the forefront of its strategic goals. Equity has also been alive in the personal development for staff, families and the board. RCS also emphasizes community outreach by regularly hosting public equity trainings and workshops. Commitment to equity also means making the model accessible to a greater socio-economic population and has yielded intentional programs aimed at building equity within the school community. In addition to maintaining preschool voucher slots and opportunity scholarship slots, RCS keeps tuition at an affordable price by charging each family about \$1,200 less than the actual cost of educating the child. This means there is a sizable operating gap. Much of this gap is raised through annual giving, but RCS has also implemented an innovative fundraising initiative called the Voluntary Equitable Tuition (VET) program. This is like a sliding scale for tuition but is tax-deductible. It has allowed RCS to increase financial assistance to \$300,000 and helped offer benefits for our teachers. For instance, RCS has improved salaries to match county and city schools, integrated an annual raise, provided a health insurance stipend and offer tuition remission that equates to about \$250,000.

Moreover, a group of dedicated staff members began meeting to address learning barriers experienced by some of the RCS scholarship students, such as food insecurities, transportation challenges and tutoring access. Some financial aid recipients give up these services offered by public systems which can make attending RCS difficult. This raised awareness yielded a pilot program called Love in Action (LIA). LIA works to provide equitable access to good and services for families in need. The program works in collaboration with MANNA Food Bank, Open Doors, and parent volunteers. LIA provides support to 32 families or 100 individuals.

Collaboration*

List any formal and/or supportive partners. Describe their roles in the project. How will they make it stronger?

RCS has not established any formal or supportive partnerships for this specific project. However, RCS does and will continue to consult with organizations such as the Sunshine Project, Buncombe County Partnership for Children, and ECERS as it designs and implements best practices and pedagogies for early childhood learning centers. Additionally, RCS will maintain partnerships with organizations such as Open Doors of Asheville, Building Bridges, Educators for Equity, and MANNA Food Bank as it expands its equity effort and community outreach. Finally, RCS plans to connect with local and regional higher education institutions with early childhood teacher training programs such as AB-Tech and Warren Wilson. By establishing these partnerships, RCS may be able to serve as a lab school or student teacher location for their preservice early childhood educators.

Budget*

Download a copy of the budget form [HERE](#). Complete the form, and upload it using the button below.

Explain how grant funds will be used, specifically what type of expenses will be covered by County funds. Describe other sources of revenue, including type of funding, source, restrictions and status.

FY21_ECE_Grant_Budget.RCS.xlsx

As a 501c3 non profit organization, RCS must raise money to fund its highly qualified program. RCS is a private school with a public purpose and you see this in our community reinvestment efforts, guiding principles, and mission which states that we "develop accomplished, confident, and creative learners who are prepared to be compassionate leaders in building a socially just, spiritually connected, and environmental sustainable world." In order to accomplish this lofty mission, acquiring funding through this grant will help offer the budget relieving support that we need to build momentum for a larger, multi-phase school expansion project. The focus of Phase 1 is preschool program expansion and the hope is that this grant will help fund the first step of Phase 1; the architectural and design services.

The scope of the architectural and design work includes structural engineering services including inspections, reporting, and any recommendations, demolition plans of an existing building, a schematic design of the new building, surrounding landscape, and outdoor learning space, design development, constructions documents, and construction administration. Traditionally, this design phase accounts for approximately 10% of the total construction costs which is based on preliminary estimates from an architect. This equates to a funding request of \$100,000.

Ultimately this planning process will set the stage for a successful expansion project. For example, the schematic design plays a very important role in garnering excitement and momentum for the launch of a capital campaign in the 2020-2021 school year. This will be a multi-phase campaign, and RCS plans to secure all capital funding from individual donors including current parents and grandparents, family foundations, business sponsorships, and additional granting organizations.

Sustainability*

How will the project continue to succeed after the funding of the grant? Explain your plan for making this an ongoing effort.

RCS will be launching a capital campaign to raise 2 million pledged over a three-year period that will yield campus expansion in two phases. Phase 1 will include the demolition of an existing building and creation of a new preschool. This preschool will include four classrooms and an outdoor learning space. Construction cost is estimated at \$1 million. Phase 1 will also include a large covered pavilion at a \$250,000 estimate. Phase 2 will include expansion of the current middle school building including an addition of an art and science classroom and enhancements for the outdoor courtyard. These construction costs are estimated at approximately \$750,000 estimate.

Based on the success of past capital and annual campaigns, RCS feels confident in securing the funding to meet its capital campaign goals. RCS has a strong and committed donor base that includes parents, grandparents, 40 years of alumni, businesses and partner organizations. Additionally, RCS recently hired an administrator for our Preschool-3rd grade division that has recent experience coordinating a 4.5 million-dollar capital campaign and associated preschool expansion project. Her experience and expertise will certainly inform our project.

Finally, the RCS, non-profit business model has proven sustainable as evidenced by several indicators of financial health. For example, RCS is a fee for service institution, maintains high enrollment numbers, and a waiting list. Therefore has a reliable source of revenue. RCS also has asset liquidity, a reserve, and is owner and steward of a 5-acre campus in the commercial sector of West Asheville.

OPTIONAL INFORMATION

OPTIONAL INFORMATION – This information will not impact grant scoring but will be helpful to the committee.

Partial Funding

If the project were to be offered a grant for partial funding, what factors would need to be considered?

This project is in its early stages. As stated in the budget section, full or partial funding for this planning process will set the stage for a successful expansion project. Ultimately, securing funding will yield a schematic design that will play a very important role in garnering excitement and momentum for the launch of a capital campaign in the spring of 2021.

Multi-Year Funding

If you would like this project to be considered for multi-year funding (up to 3 years), what amounts would you request for years 2 and 3? What milestones would this funding allow you to accomplish? Explain why more years are needed to accomplish goals.

Not applicable

Resource Support

How can Buncombe County support your organization with this project and in strengthening your work (related to equity, scale, or impact)?

RCS is committed to equity and is also driven to make its research-based, best practice model accessible to a diverse population. RCS would love to increase its family outreach efforts, specifically within the early childhood realm, through a collaboration with Buncombe County.

Scale-up

What is your vision for how the strategies from this project could contribute to a significant scale-up the overall system to collectively address the child care crisis?

This project is ultimately about increasing access to high quality early childhood programs. With the exception of this proposed expansion, RCS doesn't have the capacity to scale up- this expansion will mean that it reaches its preschool slot capacity. This does mean, however, that it is able to offer a 5-Star preschool learning experience to a greater audience and will ultimately support the holistic growth and development of 48, 2-5 year olds and their families annually. However, as a long standing preschool institution, RCS wants to be involved in a larger, collective conversation about addressing a solution to the child care crisis.

Other

Is there anything else that you want the committee to know?

CampusMaps.pdf

Attached are the preliminary architectural sketches for Phase 1 Campus Map, Phase 2 Campus Map, and the Existing Conditions Map.

File Attachment Summary

Applicant File Uploads

- FY21_ECE_Grant_Budget.RCS.xlsx
- CampusMaps.pdf

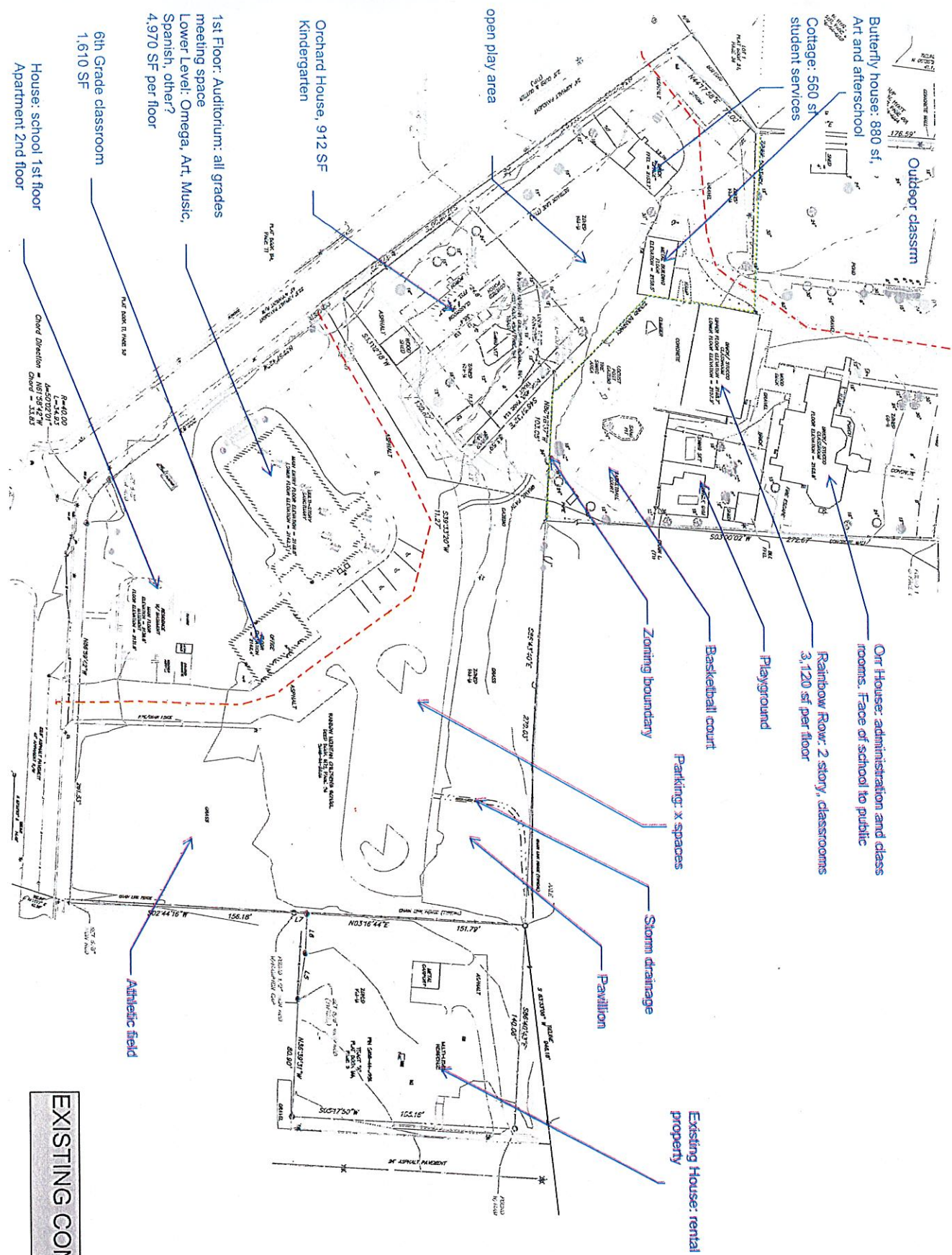
Early Childhood Education and Development Fund Proposed FY2021 Project Budget (July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021)

Organization Name:	Rainbow Community School
Project Name:	Rainbow Community School Preschool Program Expansion: Funding for architectural and design services
Grant Amount Requested:	\$100,000

FY2021 Proposed Project Revenue	Amount	Notes
Proposed Buncombe County Early Childhood Grant	\$100,000.00	Please see budget and sustainability section.
List other sources:		
List other sources:		
List other sources:		
List other sources:		
List other sources:		
List other sources:		
Total	\$ 100,000.00	

FY2021 Proposed Project Expenses	Proposed Grant	Other Funds	Total	Notes
Personnel			\$ -	
Travel/Training			\$ -	
Technology			\$ -	
Curriculum/Assessments			\$ -	
Licensing/Dues			\$ -	
Nutrition			\$ -	
Transportation			\$ -	
Supplies/Materials			\$ -	
Building Maintenance/Repair			\$ -	
Rent/Occupancy/Utilities			\$ -	
Furniture			\$ -	
Playground/Outdoor space			\$ -	
Printing/Marketing/Website/Postage			\$ -	
Admin Expenses (Legal, Accounting, Insurance, etc.)			\$ -	
Other (please list in comments section)	\$100,000.00		\$ 100,000.00	
Total			\$ 100,000.00	

Overall Organization Budget	Amount	Notes
FY2019 Actual Year-End Revenue	\$2,586,465.00	
FY2019 Actual Year-End Expenses	\$2,536,551.00	
FY2020 Adopted Budget Amount	\$2,866,304.00	Predicted expense: \$2,838,995.00
FY2021 Proposed Budget Amount	\$2,952,301.12	RCS doesn't have this number yet but this estimate assumes a 5% -5% increase from FY2020.



Outdoor classm

Butterfly house: 880 sf
Art and afterschool

Cottage: 560 sf
student services

Our House: administration and class
rooms. Face of school to public

Rainbow Row: 2 story, classrooms
3,120 sf per floor

Playground

Basketball court

Parking: x spaces

Zoning boundary

Storm drainage

Pavillion

Existing House: rental
property

open play area

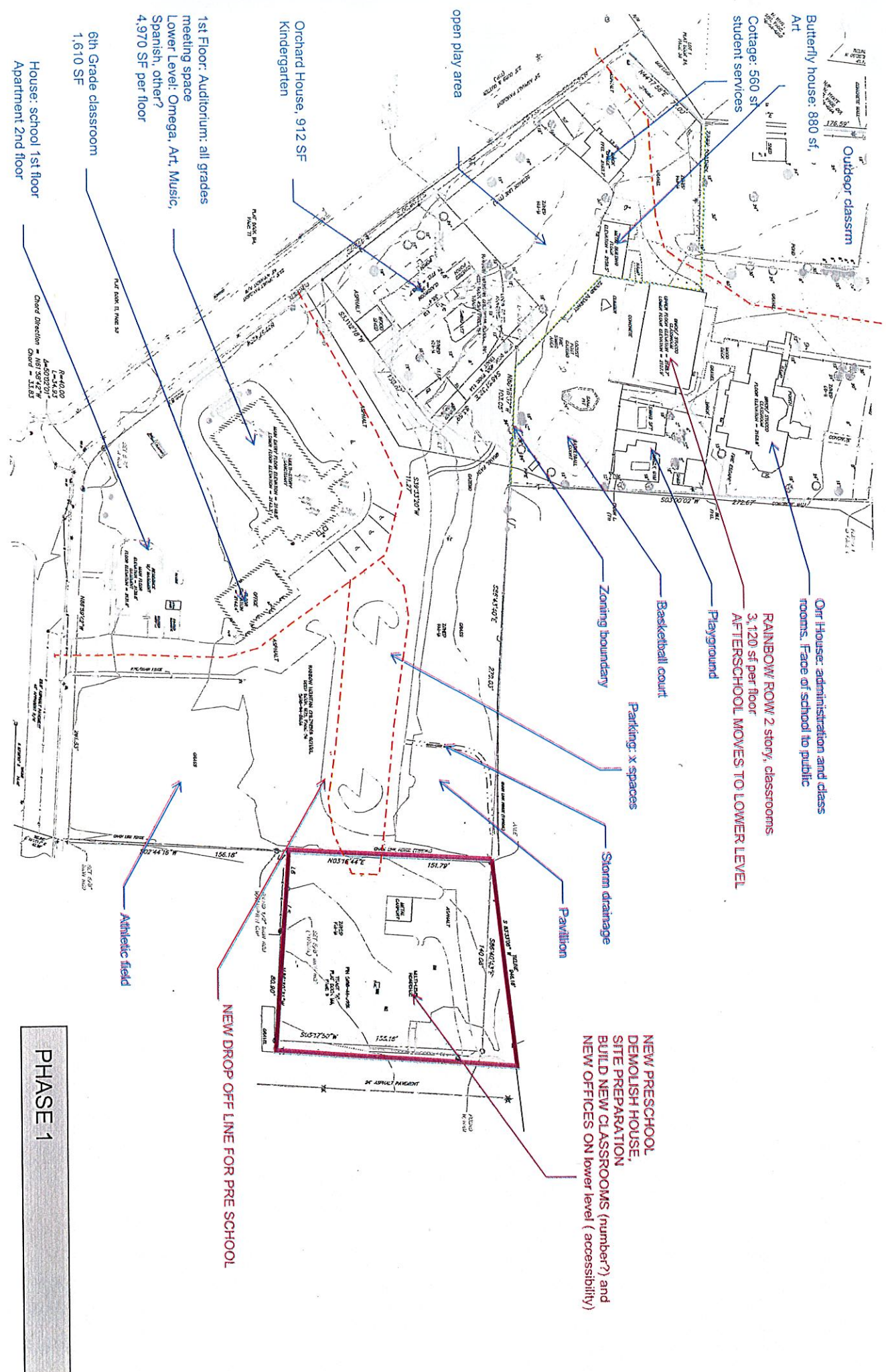
Orchard House, 912 SF
Kindergarten

1st Floor: Auditorium: all grades
meeting space
Lower Level: Omega, Art, Music,
Spanish, other?
4,970 SF per floor

6th Grade classroom
1,610 SF

House: school 1st floor
Apartment 2nd floor

EXISTING CONDITIONS MAP



Outdoor classroom

Butterfly house: 880 sf Art

Cottage: 560 sf student services

Open play area

Orchard House, 912 SF Kindergarten

1st Floor: Auditorium: all grades meeting space
Lower Level: Omega, Art, Music, Spanish, other?
4,970 SF per floor

6th Grade classroom
1,610 SF

House: school 1st floor
Apartment 2nd floor

Or House: administration and class rooms. Face of school to public

RAINBOW ROW 2 story classrooms
3,120 sf per floor
AFTERSCHOOL MOVES TO LOWER LEVEL

Playground

Basketball court

Zoning boundary

Parking: x spaces

Storm drainage

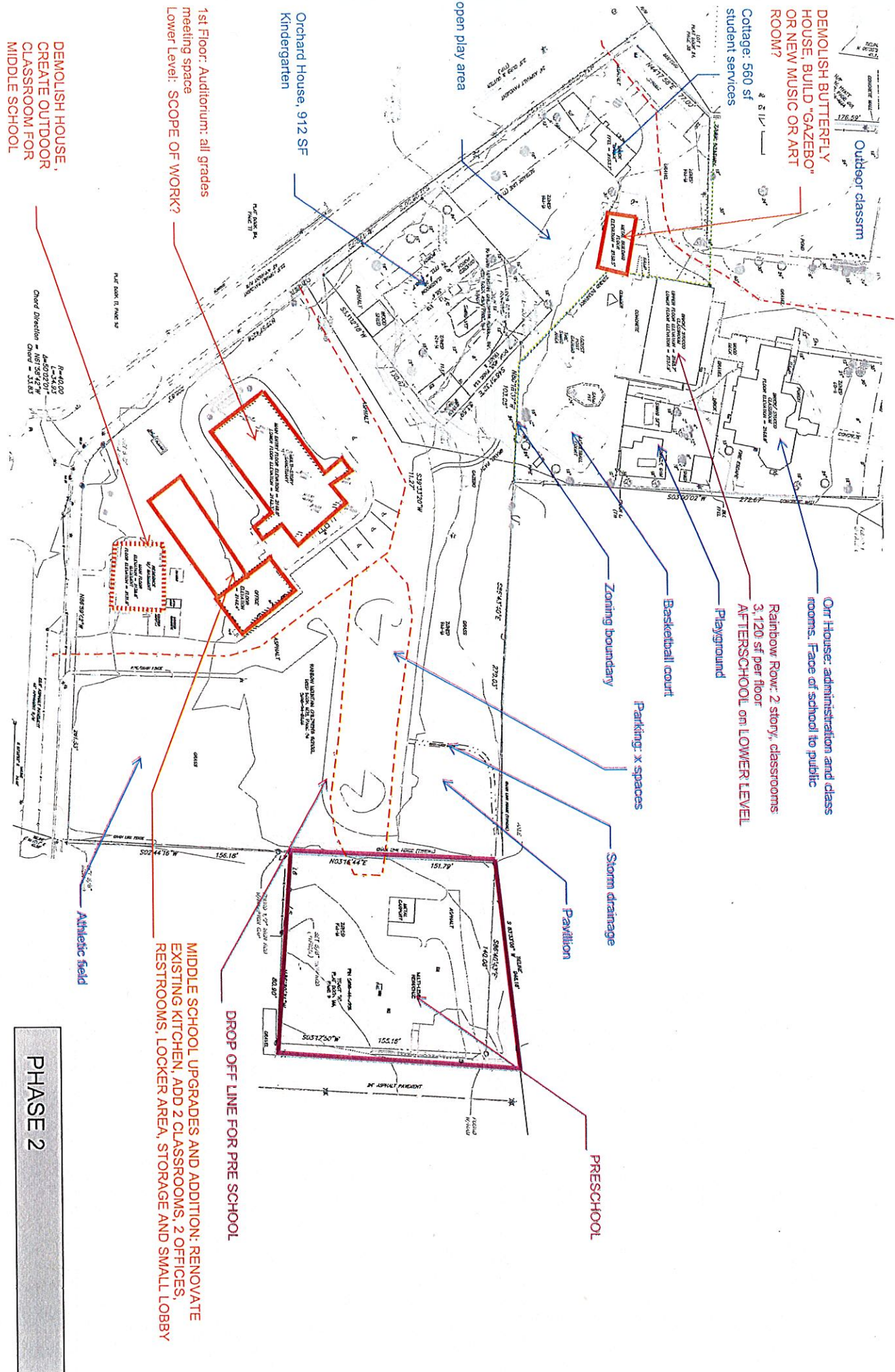
Pavillion

Athletic field

NEW PRESCHOOL
DEMOLISH HOUSE,
SITE PREPARATION
BUILD NEW CLASSROOMS (number?) and
NEW OFFICES ON lower level (accessibility)

NEW DROP OFF LINE FOR PRE SCHOOL

PHASE 1



DEMOLISH HOUSE,
CREATE OUTDOOR
CLASSROOM FOR
MIDDLE SCHOOL

PHASE 2

MIDDLE SCHOOL UPGRADES AND ADDITION: RENOVATE
EXISTING KITCHEN, ADD 2 CLASSROOMS, 2 OFFICES,
RESTROOMS, LOCKER AREA, STORAGE AND SMALL LOBBY

DROP OFF LINE FOR PRE SCHOOL

PRESCHOOL

Athletic field

Pavillion

Storm drainage

Parking: x spaces

Zoning boundary

Basketball court

Playground

Rainbow Row: 2 story, classrooms
3,120 sf per floor
AFTERSCHOOL on LOWER LEVEL

Or House: administration and class
rooms. Face of school to public

Orchard House, 912 SF
Kindergarten

Open play area

Cottage: 560 sf
student services

Outdoor classroom

DEMOLISH BUTTERFLY
HOUSE, BUILD "GAZEBO"
OR NEW MUSIC OR ART
ROOM?

Demolish House,
Create Outdoor
Classroom for
Middle School

Lower Level: SCOPE OF WORK?

1st Floor: Auditorium: all grades
meeting space

Basketball court

Parking: x spaces

Storm drainage

Pavillion

PRESCHOOL

Athletic field

DROP OFF LINE FOR PRE SCHOOL

MIDDLE SCHOOL UPGRADES AND ADDITION: RENOVATE
EXISTING KITCHEN, ADD 2 CLASSROOMS, 2 OFFICES,
RESTROOMS, LOCKER AREA, STORAGE AND SMALL LOBBY

PHASE 2