

SOUTH WINDSOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Elementary Facilities Master Plan Update

Message from the Superintendent of Schools

The last Elementary Facilities Master Plan Update was published after the February groundbreaking where over 300 residents attended the ceremony to celebrate this important milestone. As of September 2016, 50% of the construction of the new Orchard Hill is already completed. I am pleased to report that the Orchard Hill project currently remains on time and on budget.

This newsletter highlights Phase One milestones such as the Beam Signing and Topping Off ceremonies. You can also find information regarding mentoring programs offered by our design and construction professionals, as well as a spotlight on the perspective of Orchard Hill students as they watch construction progress from their classroom window. Look for our late Fall newsletter which will focus on upcoming Phase Two activities.

I hope this update is helpful to those parents and community members interested in following the progress of Phase One of the Ten-Year Plan. Please note that the Ten-Year Plan tri-fold brochure, originally published in October 2013, was updated again in September 2016 to reflect recent Phase Two changes approved by the Board of Education. This document has been widely praised for its clarity and ability to assist readers in understanding all three phases of the ten-year plan. Hard copies are available in our schools and the public library. The tri-fold brochure can also be viewed on the district's website at www.southwindsorschools.org/elementaryfacilities.

Sincerely,

KATE CARTER

Kate Carter, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

October 2016



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Construction site photo—September 13, 2016

BEAM SIGNING AND TOPPING OFF CEREMONIES

On a beautiful Tuesday evening in June, members of the Board of Education, Town Council and Public Building Commission, along with the Superintendent of Schools, school administration, parents and student ambassadors from all five elementary schools, gathered in front of the current Orchard Hill Elementary School to sign the final beam placed in the new Orchard Hill Elementary School. Prior to the event, all of the current Orchard Hill students who had been observing the construction from their classrooms had an opportunity to sign the beam. The ceremonial beam signing event marked another milestone for the Orchard Hill project. It was an honor for the dignitaries, administration and students to have their signatures forever encased in the new school. Gilbane Building Company, Drummey Rosane Anderson and Colliers International were also present at the event.

Following the beam signing ceremony, a "Topping Off Ceremony" was held at the site of the new Orchard Hill school in early July. In the construction field, topping off is a milestone celebrated by builders when the last beam is placed atop a structure during its construction. Attendees at the ceremony included project team members, school board officials, administration, town leaders, and students. "The groundbreaking in February, the beam signing in June, and the topping-off ceremony in July have all been important milestones within Phase One of our 10-Year Plan," shared Kate Carter, Superintendent of Schools. "I am heartened by our residents, community leaders and parents who have come together to work toward the common goal of investing in our children and our town's future."

The district looks forward with anticipation to the completion of the project and the opening of the new school in August 2017.



Principals, Student Ambassadors and Superintendent of Schools



Pleasant Valley student, Madeleine Edwards, grade 2



Town Officials Sign Beam



Parents of Student Ambassadors

VIEW FROM THE WINDOW...

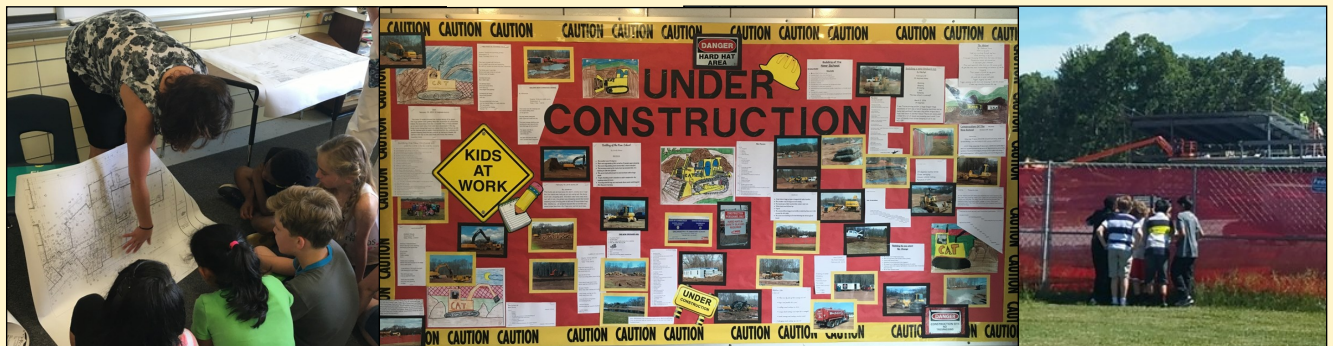
Since early this year, fourth grade students in Mrs. Janet McEleney's class at Orchard Hill have charted the progress of the new school's construction, watching through their classroom window and traveling across the field to view progress through the fence. Mrs. McEleney highlights these activities below.

With our second floor windows overlooking the sports fields and woods beyond, the quiet monotony of the winter woods hummed to life in February as giant earth moving machines began snipping down giant maples like toothpicks and shredding them to sawdust right before our very eyes! Everyone ran to the windows to watch. I brought in my family binoculars but only two eyes could peer at a time. So we put on our hats and mittens and with notebooks and pencils in hand we sprinted across the frozen ground to peer through the chain link fence. Notebook pages quickly filled with sketches, observations, and questions. We recorded everything in our Google docs journals and our quest for knowledge was underway.

When orange sheeting appeared on our fence and we couldn't see through it anymore, photographer (and paraprofessional) Kim Nowell brought a step stool to school so she could take pictures over the fence. She also assisted students as they peeked over the fence every Friday. Friday became our favorite day of the week! The fourth graders waved to construction workers, and the workers beeped back. The trees came down and the children wrote poetry full of similes and metaphors and technical construction vocabulary. Some researched the earth-moving giants through books and the internet and drew meticulous pictures capturing their power and beauty. In math we learned perimeter and area with ease: the perimeter is the fence and the area is everything inside. The children were eager to share their excitement with an authentic audience. The hallway bulletin board at the entrance to Orchard Hill seemed the perfect venue. Mrs. Nowell downloaded her photos and framed the bulletin board where students proudly displayed their work and shared their "window" with everyone who entered.

More magic appeared one day when we looked out the window to see child-size windows cut out of the orange sheeting so we could gaze at the construction together, and for longer periods of time. (The workers had seen us on the stepladder peeking over the top of the fence.) The questions and predictions grew, leading to even more dialogue, research, and observation. We were very fortunate when Angie and Taylor, the architect and construction manager, came to the classroom with blueprints. They stayed for 90 minutes to answer eager student questions. After their visit, student engagement continued with the discussion of possible career paths, making schoolwork in art, science, math, and reading far more enticing.

In our Connecticut unit in social studies, we learned about representative government and taxes and how our families' taxes (both in South Windsor and in Connecticut) helped to pay for this beautiful new building. We vowed to be good stewards of our many rights and responsibilities as members of a greater community. When we all signed the topping off beam in June, we felt the pride of an entire community who came together to provide for the future learning of yet another generation of children in South Windsor!



STUDENT ENRICHMENT AND MENTORING PROGRAMS

The new Orchard Hill facilities project has created some exciting enrichment and mentoring opportunities for middle and high school students. The Design and Construction industry is currently ranked 2nd after Healthcare as the industry projected to see the most growth in the next decade (Bureau of Labor Statistics). As a consequence, this project presents some truly meaningful opportunities for students to learn about future career paths firsthand.

Over the summer, construction professionals from Gilbane Building Company and DRA Architects, Inc. offered sessions for students to learn about the Orchard Hill building construction project and what it's like to be an architect, engineer, construction manager, or contractor. Approximately 15 students met every other Wednesday from June through August. They had the chance to tour the new Orchard Hill building site with the designers and builders. Tour leaders introduced students to the construction plans and how to read architect's drawings.

This school year, design professionals have created a seminar-style after-school experience for students from Timothy Edwards Middle School. Each month, students will learn the many types of design, engineering, and labor involved in creating a built structure. From the initial masterplan to the final finishes, students will learn about the skills and education needed to become a design professional or skilled tradesman. Examples of professions to be covered include landscape design, civil engineering, architecture, interior design, structural engineering, mechanical & electrical engineering, construction management, and trade construction. One of the TEMS 7th grade students commented, "It was really cool to see the different type of architectural drawings of the 'new' Orchard Hill, including the elevation drawings. When we walked out on the construction job site, it was really interesting to see how the building materials blend in for both safety and aesthetic purposes."

Both DRA Architects and Gilbane have also extended an invitation to South Windsor High School seniors interested in using the Design and Construction industry as the focus of their Senior Capstone Project. High school students can make arrangements to visit the construction site trailer, the architect's office, and the job site to learn more about these exciting careers.

As we head into future phases of this 10-year project, we will continue to explore other ways to provide students with these types of enrichment experiences in order to learn more about this industry.



PHASE ONE MILESTONES TO-DATE

- 9/2011** Strategic Plan adopted by Board of Education
- 7/2013** School conditions assessed
- 10/2013** Elementary Facilities Plan approved by BOE
- 12/2013** Master Plan presented to Town Council by BOE
- 12/2013** Education Specifications approved by BOE
- 3/2014** Referendum passed by South Windsor residents
- 3/2014** PBC appointed by Town Council
- 6/2014** ED049 Grant Application filed
- 7/2014** Architect selected by PBC
- 8/2014** Owner's Representative selected by PBC
- 9/2014** Education programming meetings held
- 10/2014** Geotechnical site exploration conducted
- 12/2014** Community public information session held
- 12/2014** Construction Manager selected by PBC
- 1/2015** Surveying work conducted
- 2/2015** Schematic Design documents approved by PBC
- 3/2015** Project reviewed by Planning and Zoning
- 4/2015** Commissioning Agent selected by PBC
- 5/2015** Community public information session held
- 6/2015** ED049 Grant Application approved by the state
- 7/2015** Plan reviewed by Office of School Construction Grants (OSCG)
- 8/2015** Project approved by Inland Wetlands Agency/ Conservation Commission
- 9/2015** Revisions to Ed Specs approved by BOE
- 11/2015** Final approval of plans and specs by BOE and PBC
- 11/2015** OSCG completes plan review
- 1/2016** Construction contracts awarded by PBC
- 2/2016** Community public information session held
- 2/2016** Groundbreaking Ceremony for new Orchard Hill
- 6/2016** Orchard Hill Beam Signing
- 7/2016** Orchard Hill Topping Off Ceremony

SOUTH WINDSOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Board of Education

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Beth Esstman, Vice Chairman
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Joseph Durette
Jamie Gamble
Michael Gonzalez
Mary Justine Hockenberry
Phil Koboski
Rick Stahr

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Sheryl L. Mortensen, Assistant Superintendent
Colin J. McNamara, Assistant Superintendent
Chris M. Chemerka, Director of Finance & Operations
Patrick Hankard, Director of Facility Operations



PUBLIC BUILDING COMMISSION

Phil Koboski, Chairman; Carol Kelley, Vice Chairman;
Matthew Beaulieu; Charley Lyons; Matthew Montana;
Ed O'Connell; Bernard Thomas

PHASE ONE PROJECT PROFESSIONALS

Architect: Drummey Rosane Anderson (DRA)

Owner's Rep: Colliers International

Construction Manager: Gilbane Building Company