

South Windsor Board of Education

1737 Main Street
South Windsor, CT 06074

Non-Profit Org
US Postage
PAID
Hartford, CT
Permit #5205

Special Report—January 2014

Elementary Schools Ten-Year Master Plan

To Town of South Windsor Residents and Families:

In October 2013, your Board of Education adopted the *Elementary Facilities Master Plan* to address our five aging elementary school buildings, which range in age from 48 to 60 years old. The plan reflects the work of the Superintendent of Schools and the Board of Education over the last year. It is responsive to the *South Windsor Public Schools 2011-2014 Strategic Plan*, which calls for the development of a “long-range elementary facilities plan that promotes a safe, engaging learning environment that is accessible to all students and community members.”

The comprehensive plan will allow our elementary school buildings to:

- Provide learning environments designed for current instructional strategies,
- Benefit from needed technology upgrades,
- Comply with current building and fire codes,
- Incorporate enhanced school security,
- Include safer traffic pattern designs,
- Utilize modern, efficient heating and cooling systems,
- Deliver improved indoor air quality, and
- Provide accessibility to all by meeting the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The plan will be accomplished in three phases and will use multiple referenda to address the elementary facilities needs over the next decade. The plan calls for a staggered construction schedule that is outlined in the enclosed *Elementary Facilities Ten-Year Timeline*, which provides you with an easy way to understand the phases and components needed to accomplish the plan.

Phase One of the plan includes:

- Building a new elementary school on the Orchard Hill elementary campus, then:

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Letter from the Board of Education	1
Frequently Asked Questions	2
Ten-Year Timeline	4
Definitions	6
Members of Board/ Administration	6
Community Survey	7

- Moving to a four-school configuration by closing the existing Wapping School and returning it to the Town for community use, and
- Re-using the existing Orchard Hill School for “swing space” for students of the other schools impacted by the later renovation and construction projects in Phases Two and Three of the plan.

This month we will ask the Town Council to schedule a referendum on March 25, 2014 to seek voter approval to borrow for the construction costs of the new school in **Phase One**.

As we move closer to the planned referendum date, we will provide another mailing with more information concerning Phase One, including construction cost estimates, tax impact details, and reimbursement from the State of Connecticut.

If you would like additional information now, please visit our website for a comprehensive set of reports, meeting videos and other plan artifacts that will help you understand more about this important initiative for the South Windsor community. On the last two pages of this mailing is a brief survey that will assist in ensuring that the community remains informed about this initiative. We appreciate your taking the time to respond to this survey.

Sincerely,

South Windsor Board of Education

WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.southwindsorschools.org/elementaryfacilities

Frequently Asked Questions

Why start with only one school?

The last referendum called for the community to commit to funding all four schools at once. Community feedback suggests that this was simply too significant an expenditure and that a staggered approach would be more likely to be embraced by the community.

There are practical advantages as well. The construction of even a single school will require significant time on the part of Board of Education staff. We must consider our capacity to effectively oversee the project, partner with the Public Building Commission, and collaborate with the design and construction professionals in order to meet all of our responsibilities.

A staggered approach allows us to apply lessons learned to future projects, reassess enrollment projections along the way, and ensure that future maintenance schedules are also somewhat staggered. We also believe that a successful first project will serve to inform community members as they consider future school projects.

Why was Orchard Hill chosen as the first site?

Not all of our sites contain the acreage or topography that allows for new construction to occur on site while the original building remains standing. Philip R. Smith and Pleasant Valley do not have sites that are conducive to parallel construction. Eli Terry’s site allows for a second building to be constructed while the original building is occupied. Eventually the original Eli Terry building would need to be razed to make room for playground areas and replacement ball fields. The Orchard Hill site not only

allows for a new building to coexist with the original building, but it also has the space for playground areas and ball fields without having to raze the original building. This dynamic allows the original Orchard Hill School to serve as swing space. Establishing this cost effective swing space in Phase One is a critical component to the plan. Another benefit is Orchard Hill’s proximity to Timothy Edwards Middle School (TEMS), which may be of some assistance to families who have older children at TEMS and younger children attending the former Orchard Hill while their school is being renovated.

How does this approach differ from previous efforts?

While the concept of closing Wapping School and moving from five to four elementary schools was integral to the previous plan outlined in the 2008 referendum, there are some key differences in the current master plan. Chief among them is the concept of beginning with only one school. Community feedback suggests that the previous effort to fund all four schools at once was a major reason the plan was rejected.

Another key difference is the Board of Education’s direction to the Superintendent of Schools to bring forth only one recommendation for its consideration. We heard from many stakeholders that there were simply too many options during the last referendum which led to confusion among the voters.

Another difference lies in the clarity with which the potential win-wins are outlined. We are told that these opportu-

nities were alluded to last time, but never revealed with clarity for the community to consider.

While the needs of our aging facilities were presented in previous referenda, it was suggested that even more should be done to communicate the deficiencies of our current facilities. To that end, we plan to conduct tours of our elementary buildings to provide the community an opportunity to better understand current conditions.

Since the last referendum, our declining enrollment is more evident and the case for closing a school is clear. Current enrollment data provides evidence that it is no longer efficient to operate five schools. There is also compelling rationale for selecting Wapping School as the school to be closed. We are hopeful that there will be greater acceptance among those who were averse to closing Wapping Elementary School during the last referendum.

The last plan called for new offices for the central office administration. This plan excludes that expense. We believe the focus needs to be on our students and the schools in which they learn. The administrative offices are not a priority at this time.

Finally, the tragic events of Newtown have changed the conversation regarding new school construction. Some school security features will now be considered non-negotiable. Our conversations around school design will differ from previous years due to the heartbreaking realities that confront us.

What if our student population increases over time?

Architects always consider future additions in school design. It is important to note that even if we were certain there would be a significant population growth in twenty years, the state's reimbursement formula is predicated on building to a capacity that does not exceed the projected highest enrollment within an eight-year timeframe.

Who decides the future use of Wapping School?

Once the Board of Education turns a school over to the town, it will be the Town Council which decides if a building is razed or repurposed for other community needs.

What do new schools offer that our existing schools do not?

Among other factors, new schools offer ADA compliance, modern technology, enhanced school security features, more efficient utilities, environmentally conscious design, improved indoor air quality, educational spaces designed for current instructional strategies, safer traffic pattern

designs, and climate-controlled spaces.

If I vote yes in the spring 2014 referendum, does that commit South Windsor residents to the entire ten-year plan?

No. By utilizing a staggered referenda approach we allow the community to have its say at each stage of the ten-year plan. Residents will vote in March 2014 regarding the construction of one new school as part of Phase One. It is our hope that a successful first school will inspire the community to maintain fidelity to the long-range plan, but initially the financial commitment is to begin with one school. We have, however, outlined the long-range plan and the estimates for future costs, ensuring that the community is well informed about the comprehensive plan in advance of voting on the first phase of a multi-phase plan.

Does the community at large benefit from new schools?

Yes. High quality schools protect property values. Realtors routinely cite the quality of our school system as a vehicle for promoting home ownership in South Windsor. The plan also offers some potential benefits for community members seeking improvements associated with dedicated space for senior citizens and for the recreation department. Our school facilities are used extensively by many community groups that meet in our facilities when school is not in session. These groups will also benefit from modern, climate controlled, ADA compliant schools .

What criteria are used to determine the use of a renovate-like-new project versus new school construction?

Many factors go into the decision regarding new construction or renovation. Chief among these factors is cost. Currently, the State of Connecticut reimburses at a higher rate for renovations as a means of incentivizing districts to renovate. However, even with a more favorable reimbursement rate, it can still be more cost effective to build new. Among other considerations, architects and engineers must consider the size of the site, the topography of the site, the quality of the existing infrastructure of the building, and the abatement of environmental hazards. Consideration must also be given to the availability of alternative swing space during a renovation project.

What is our reimbursement rate?

South Windsor's current reimbursement rate is 34.64% for new school construction, and 44.64% for renovate-like-new projects.

	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
ORCHARD HILL ELEMENTARY (OH)	REFERENDUM YEAR			REFERENDUM YEAR	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st year of full day kindergarten Develop Ed Specs Anticipated March 2014 Referendum ED 049 due 6/30/14 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State review ED 049 Design phase of new OH school Grant approval June 2015 Construction begins on new OH School in August 2015 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction continues OH students remain in original OH school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OH students remain in original OH School Construction completed in late Winter 2017 	<p>OPEN NEW ORCHARD HILL SCHOOL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OH welcomes 125 students from WES, and 70 Pre-K students from ET Original OH building becomes "swing space" school
	<i>Current Enrollment: 387</i>	<i>Projected Enrollment: 379</i>	<i>Projected Enrollment: 378</i>	<i>Projected Enrollment: 375</i>	<i>Projected Enrollment: 564</i>
WAPPING ELEMENTARY (WES)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st year of full day kindergarten Overcrowded conditions Temporary music classroom in cafeteria due to lack of space 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin planning redistricting for students and staff Transportation analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop new bus routes for redistricted students Develop plan for K-5 staffing assignments in response to redistricting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turn WES over to town WES students redistricted to surrounding schools
	<i>Current Enrollment: 302</i>	<i>Projected Enrollment: 317</i>	<i>Projected Enrollment: 320</i>	<i>Projected Enrollment: 328</i>	
ELI TERRY ELEMENTARY (ET)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st year of full day kindergarten Overcrowded conditions Art-on-a-Cart due to lack of space Pre-K consumes six classroom spaces 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin planning for Pre-K population to move to new OH school in Fall 2017 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Ed Specs Spring referendum to build new ET School ED 049 due 6/30/17 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State review ED 049 Design phase of new school Grant approval June 2018 70 Pre-K students transition to new OH Construction begins August 2018
	<i>Current Enrollment: 441</i>	<i>Projected Enrollment: 458</i>	<i>Projected Enrollment: 478</i>	<i>Projected Enrollment: 485</i>	<i>Projected Enrollment: 428</i>
PHILIP R. SMITH ELEMENTARY (PRS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st year of full day kindergarten 3 portable classrooms closed due to unsafe conditions 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Ed Specs Spring referendum to "renovate like new" existing PRS School ED 049 due 6/30/17 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State review ED 049 Design phase of renovated school Grant approval June 2018 PRS welcomes 109 students from WES
	<i>Current Enrollment: 352</i>	<i>Projected Enrollment: 337</i>	<i>Projected Enrollment: 327</i>	<i>Projected Enrollment: 296</i>	<i>Projected Enrollment: 388</i>
PLEASANT VALLEY ELEMENTARY (PV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st year of full day kindergarten Install new kitchen floor/ and remove asbestos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace PV roof 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PV welcomes 109 students from WES
	<i>Current Enrollment: 347</i>	<i>Projected Enrollment: 336</i>	<i>Projected Enrollment: 335</i>	<i>Projected Enrollment: 295</i>	<i>Projected Enrollment: 408</i>

2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022/ 2022–2023	2023-2024
	REFERENDUM YEAR			
				• Original Orchard Hill School no longer needed for swing space
<i>Projected Enrollment: 554</i>	<i>Projected Enrollment: 540</i>	<i>Projected Enrollment: 524</i>	<i>Projected Enrollment: 511/509</i>	<i>Projected Enrollment: 494</i>

--	--	--	--	--

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction continues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction completed in late Winter 2020 • Demolish old ET building to construct new play-ground areas and ball fields in Summer 2020 	OPEN NEW ELI TERRY SCHOOL		
<i>Projected Enrollment: 442</i>	<i>Projected Enrollment: 428</i>	<i>Projected Enrollment: 413</i>	<i>Projected Enrollment: 400/399</i>	<i>Projected Enrollment: 384</i>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renovations begin in Fall 2018 • PRS students attend swing space school (original OH building) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRS students attend swing space school • Renovations completed in Spring 2020 	OPEN NEW PHILIP R. SMITH SCHOOL		
<i>Projected Enrollment: 386</i>	<i>Projected Enrollment: 376</i>	<i>Projected Enrollment: 366</i>	<i>Projected Enrollment: 353/353</i>	<i>Projected Enrollment: 340</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Ed Specs • Spring referendum to “renovate like new” existing PV School • ED 049 due 6/30/20 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State review ED 049 • Design phase of renovated school • Grant approval June 2021 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renovations begin in Fall 2021 • PV students attend swing space school • Renovations completed in Spring 2023 	OPEN NEW PLEASANT VALLEY SCHOOL
<i>Projected Enrollment: 407</i>	<i>Projected Enrollment: 396</i>	<i>Projected Enrollment: 383</i>	<i>Projected Enrollment: 370/370</i>	<i>Projected Enrollment: 356</i>

Phase One: Orchard Hill

Phase Two: Eli Terry and Philip R. Smith

Phase Three: Pleasant Valley



About this Document

The preceding pages outline a plan for addressing our aging elementary schools, as adopted by the Board of Education on October 29, 2013. This Plan includes a timeline for consolidating from five elementary schools to four. Without question, changes in enrollment, changes in reimbursement rates, changes in the economy, and changes in education legislation could alter this Master Plan or its intended timeline. While variables may arise, we believe a transparent and detailed proposal of a ten-year scenario, based on the information available to us today, allows for a conceptual long-range plan for the community to consider.

Terms

The following terms are used throughout. Broadly defined, their meanings are as follows:

Educational Specifications: Also known as "Ed Specs." A document required by the State of Connecticut for the school construction grant process. It provides a written justification of the educational need for the project, a description of the educational activities supported by the building at completion, proposed project capacity, accommodation for educational technology, and is ultimately used by design professionals to direct them through the design process.

ED 049: The ED 049 is the school construction grant application form and is accompanied by the educational specifications that must be filed with the State of Connecticut in order to seek reimbursement for a school building project.

Referendum: The submission of a proposed public measure to a direct popular vote. A referendum usually offers the electorate two choices: to accept or reject the proposal.

Renovate-Like-New: A renovate-like-new school building project completely refurbishes an existing building and results in the renovated facility taking on a useful life comparable to that of a new facility. This is much more comprehensive than an "alteration" project, and must address all aspects of the building. Many of the costs considered ineligible for state reimbursement in an alteration may be reimbursable in a renovation. While a renovate-like-new project utilizes the building's existing footprint, it can include additions.

Swing Space School: A temporary educational space that students and staff use while their school building is being renovated.

South Windsor Board of Education and Administration

Members of the Board of Education:

David S. Joy, Chair

Diane Behler

Phil Koboski

Lisa Maneeley, Vice Chair

Carol Driscoll

Matthew Riley

Craig Zimmerman, Secretary

Michael Gonzalez

Richard Stahr

South Windsor Public Schools Administration:

Kate Carter, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

Daniel S. Hansen, Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum & Instruction

Richard A. Cormier, Assistant Superintendent, Personnel & Administration

Chris Chemerka, Director, Finance & Operations

South Windsor Community Survey

Please take a few minutes to complete the following brief survey. Your feedback is important to us and will help ensure that you are fully informed about the South Windsor Public Schools Elementary Facilities Master Plan. The Board of Education anticipates a referendum regarding Phase One of the plan to occur in March 2014. Individual responses are anonymous. Highlights of the survey results will be posted on the district website. The complete results will be made available for review at the board of education office. Please fold according to instructions and mail back by **January 24, 2014**. Thank you.

Please use a PEN to fill in circles completely. Fold on the dotted lines, tape three open sides, and mail.

❶ Based on information outlined in the South Windsor Public Schools Elementary Facilities Master Plan, how important are the following potential outcomes to you:

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	No Opinion
a. Integration of improved educational technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Enhanced school security	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Improved indoor air quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Classrooms designed and built for current teaching and learning strategies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Safer traffic patterns for student arrival/dismissal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Efficient heating and cooling systems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Compliance with current building and fire codes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

❷ Would you participate in an elementary school tour to gain a better understanding of current conditions?	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>	Not Sure <input type="radio"/>
---	------------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------------

❸ Do you believe there is a correlation between property values and the quality of our schools?	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>	Not Sure <input type="radio"/>
--	------------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------------

❹ Do you have children living at home?	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
---	------------------------------	-----------------------------

	Under 5	5-10	11 - 13	14 - 18	19+
❺ If yes, fill in all ages that apply:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	< 2	2-10	11-20	21-30	>30
❻ How many years have you lived in South Windsor?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

❼ Do you have enough information to make an informed decision regarding Phase One of the Master Plan?	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>	Not Sure <input type="radio"/>
--	------------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------------

If no, please tell us what additional information you need to make an informed decision.

TEAR AND RETURN

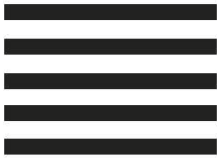


NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 7 SOUTH WINDSOR, CT

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

SOUTH WINDSOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS
1737 MAIN STREET
SOUTH WINDSOR CT 06074-9927



MAILING INSTRUCTIONS:

Please fold in thirds, affix tape on the three (3) open sides, and mail by January 24. No postage is required.

**8 How do you currently receive your information regarding South Windsor Public Schools?
How do you prefer to receive your information regarding South Windsor Public Schools?**

	Currently Receive Info	Prefer to Receive Info
a. District website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Board of Education meetings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Town Council meetings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Hartford Courant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. ReminderNews	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. South Windsor Patch	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Journal Inquirer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. SchoolMessenger (phone and email communication system for parents)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. School employees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. Friends, neighbors, students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Yes	No	Not Sure
9 Do you plan to cast a vote in the March 2014 referendum?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10 Other comments (please keep to fewer than 50 words):
