



SOUTH WINDSOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

1737 Main Street
South Windsor, CT 06074



December 13, 2013

A Message to Elementary School Families:

On October 29, 2013, the South Windsor Board of Education adopted an **Elementary Facilities Master Plan** in order to address the conditions of our aging elementary school buildings. At a recent meeting with PTO leadership from across the district, we distributed copies of the **Elementary Facilities Ten-Year Timeline**, a tri-fold document that outlines the ten-year master plan. PTO presidents urged the administration to send this particular document home through Friday Folders citing its clear, easy-to-follow, parent-friendly format. In response to their advice, we have enclosed a copy of the ten-year timeline. We hope this document is helpful to you and furthers your understanding of the Master Plan.

The Master Plan 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 Board of Education has adopted a three-phase approach that will use multiple referenda and staggered construction schedules to address our needs over the next decade. The plan will provide for school buildings that:

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

The immediate focus is on **Phase One** of the plan, which calls for building a new elementary school on the Orchard Hill campus. The existing Orchard Hill building will serve as “swing space” for the Philip R. Smith and Pleasant Valley communities to use while their buildings are being renovated. The use of swing space ensures that student learning will not be disrupted during construction nor will student safety be compromised. The pre-school program currently housed at Eli Terry will relocate to the new Orchard Hill School, alleviating the over-crowded conditions at Eli Terry while providing age-appropriate instructional spaces specifically designed for pre-school needs.

Once the new Orchard Hill School is complete, the district will move to a four-school configuration by closing Wapping School and returning it to the Town for other potential community use. The decision to close Wapping School is in response to declining enrollment, a dynamic that is occurring in many towns. The redistricting of Wapping students will be handled in a thoughtful manner and the process will honor the history of this school community. Wapping families are receiving an additional communication in their Friday Folders which speaks in greater detail to the rationale for closing Wapping School. While a hard copy of this second letter was not included in the Friday Folders of other elementary school communities, all parents can view this letter on our website.

Next month, the Board of Education will request the Town Council to schedule a referendum for March 25, 2014 to seek voter approval to borrow for the construction costs of the new Orchard Hill School in Phase One. The Board of Education plans to mail additional information to all South Windsor households, including construction cost estimates and tax implications. In the meantime, if you would like additional information, please visit our website (www.southwindsorschools.org/elementaryfacilities) 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. I also plan to make myself available at future PTO meetings and other parent forums to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Kate Carter, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools