



A Message from Kara Nelson Baekey and Norwalk BOE

South Norwalk Neighborhood School Is a Need

Norwalk Public Schools is committed to engaging our families, including them in their child's academic success, and making it easy for them to be an active participant in their school community.

Over the last 40 years, families in South Norwalk were not afforded the same level of accessibility to their child's school as other families around the district who were fortunate enough to have a neighborhood school near their home. South Norwalk families faced multiple barriers to being an active participant in their child's learning.

The new South Norwalk school is helping to break down those barriers such as transportation and communication. The new neighborhood school allows parents and guardians in that community to more easily engage with school staff and other families.

Norwalk Public Schools prides itself on neighborhood schools, and families in every neighborhood should get that opportunity. Incoming students living in South Norwalk will no longer be subjected to long bus rides across town to attend school. They will be able to attend school with the friends they've made across the street or at the neighborhood park.

Their families who struggled with transportation barriers can now walk to the school, communicate with the teachers and staff in person more often, and attend after school activities which builds community, a top priority for Principal Dr. Alycia Rhinehart.

Under Dr. Rhinehart's leadership, the South Norwalk Neighborhood School is committed to giving these parents a voice that they've never had before due to their location and the subsequent barriers to access. These voices will play an important role in the growth and evolution of the school, from the point of this first year of students within the incubator school and beyond.

If you are a parent with a child who is lucky enough to have access to a neighborhood school, please put yourself in the shoes of those parents in South Norwalk.

Imagine having to tell your inbound kindergartner that they will not be attending the same school as their best friend who lives next door, and that instead they will be getting on a bus very early

every morning to go up to the Cranbury area for their school, joining a class of other 5-year olds that they most likely have never met before. Then they will need to take a long bus ride back home each day.

Add on to that the travel that you as a parent will need to handle when parent-teacher conferences, school concerts and every other campus event happens - for 6 years.

I think that if you were to ask the parents and students of the South Norwalk community if the launching of their new and long awaited school was a want or a need, the response would be a resounding - it's a need. And it has been for 40 long years.

Additional Information

A Neighborhood School in South Norwalk

South Norwalk has not had a neighborhood school in more than 40 years. The City acquired property in South Norwalk for a long-overdue neighborhood school. This will eliminate the unassigned and satellite attendance areas in place for many years for South Norwalk students, provide educational options within the neighborhood, and support enrollment needs across the district.

When CMS moved into the new K-8 building on the Ponus Ridge campus, an opportunity arose to begin phasing (incubating) the new South Norwalk School with pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students beginning in FY22-23. The new school is now establishing its staffing, programs and character while design work and construction is underway. Once construction is complete, the new school will have already established several grade levels.

Unlike other schools, for FY22-23 the South Norwalk School only has pre-kindergartners and kindergartners. In FY23-24, as the pre-kindergartners advance to kindergarten, and kindergartners advance to 1st grade, new pre-kindergartners and kindergartners will enroll. The new enrollment will almost double the student population during the second year. However, school expenses will not double as there are a number of fixed costs that will not proportionately increase, such as Principal, Secretary, Social Worker etc. We do anticipate needing three 1st Grade teachers for FY23-24. Until the school is fully enrolled, the per pupil cost will decrease and will eventually align with other elementary schools.

It is also important to note that as enrollment at the South Norwalk School increases (due to student/parent choice), there will be corresponding enrollment decreases at other elementary schools.

The chart below shows elementary schools per pupil comparison for FY22-23 and FY23-24 that highlights the change in per-pupil cost at the South Norwalk School. These costs are only for the school-based budget and do not include other district-wide school support costs.

The FY23-24 Budgets are tentative drafts and the future enrollments are based on demographer estimates. These enrollment projections periodically get updated throughout the budget process.

School	10/1/22 Actual Enrollment	1/1/23 Actual Enrollment	FY23 Rev. Budget (School Based Only)	Per Pupil (School Based Only)	10/1/23 Projected Enrollment	FY24 Tent. Budget (School Based Only)	Per Pupil (School Based Only)
South Norwalk School	66	75	1,553,669	20,716	150	1,907,669	12,718
Brookside Elementary School	401	435	4,801,919	11,039	397	5,153,200	12,980
Cranbury Elementary School	419	422	4,940,985	11,708	399	4,948,056	12,401
Fox Run Elementary School	367	375	4,174,580	11,132	349	4,643,796	13,306
Jefferson Marine Science Elementary School	425	427	5,069,448	11,872	417	5,113,384	12,262
Kendall College and Career Academy	385	407	4,620,696	11,353	362	4,525,472	12,501
Marvin Elementary School	413	417	5,159,466	12,373	407	5,250,040	12,899
Naramake	345	365	4,224,741	11,575	335	4,037,519	12,052
Rowayton	468	464	5,710,787	12,308	456	5,481,137	12,020
Silvermine	464	463	5,282,077	11,408	471	5,314,267	11,283
Tracey	465	466	5,433,199	11,659	463	5,175,058	11,177
Wolfpit	343	358	3,551,912	9,922	359	3,804,364	10,597