



CITY OF NORWALK

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**For Immediate Release**

Monday, April 1, 2024

***Mayor Rilling, Senator Duff, Governor Lamont, Commissioner Gilman and  
Norwalk Public Schools Celebrated the Groundbreaking of the New School  
Construction for Norwalk High School and P-TECH Norwalk***

**(Norwalk, Conn.)** Today, April 1, 2024, Mayor Rilling and Norwalk Public Schools were joined by Governor Ned Lamont, State Senator Bob Duff, Michelle Gilman, Commissioner of the CT State Department of Administrative Services (DAS) and other state, local and school leaders to celebrate the official groundbreaking for the Norwalk High School and P-TECH Norwalk building.

The City of Norwalk is receiving an unprecedented 80% reimbursement rate from the State, saving local taxpayers \$138 million. The reimbursement rate was primarily made possible thanks to Senator Duff's advocacy and hard work.

Norwalk High School and the P-TECH building are projected to be move-in ready by the fall of 2027, with all site work completed by the fall of 2028. The construction project will include the two schools, the P-TECH program and the comprehensive Norwalk High School, with a total enrollment of 2,000 students.

"To fulfill our mission of continuing to provide an excellent and equitable education for all students, it's imperative that we create a learning environment conducive to 21st-century demands," **said Mayor Rilling**. "This new state-of-the-art learning environment would not be possible without the unprecedented 80% reimbursement rate from the State, thanks in large part to the incredible leadership

of Senator Duff. This extraordinary reimbursement rate will save taxpayers millions upon millions of dollars while making sure our students and future generations are best equipped for the future."

"It would be easy to keep the status quo," **said Senator Bob Duff, Senate Majority Leader.** "We have great teachers, administrators and staff who persevere and demand excellence despite the challenges of a 1971 learning facility. We have awesome students who work hard and succeed despite leaks, cold and hot rooms, unusable courtyards, a library that is so functionally out of date that some of the middle schools are better equipped and a cafeteria that can't keep up with the student population. Let alone the security challenges that I won't go into. There's a pool with air quality problems, locker rooms that are not ADA compliant and bathrooms on all floors with plumbing encased in concrete, making it virtually impossible to repair or update. If we were not here today at this groundbreaking, the City of Norwalk and the State of Connecticut would need to invest \$20 million dollars at a minimum to maintain the status quo. That would still leave us with a third-rate auditorium, a gymnasium with mold and termite damage, classrooms without elevator access and a substandard physical plant. The worst part – after tens of millions of dollars, the money invested would be invisible. Barely any of the work would be noticed. That's why it's time for a new school."

"Education is our secret sauce," **said Governor Ned Lamont.** "Connecticut has the best and most productive workforce in the world. The skills you need going forward are much more sophisticated in order to manage a lot of computerization and manufacturing across all different industry sectors. Our investments in these new schools show that we really care about our students and are invested in their education and their futures."

"It's a really phenomenal process and partnership that the DAS team and the community has working together, especially when you look at the end product and the result of a beautiful new school that will meet the needs of the students, the faculty and the community because we know that our schools are parts of our community, they're community centers," **said Michelle Gilman, Commissioner of the CT State Department of Administrative Services.** "So being able to be a part of that in our small way up at the State and then working with the Governor, the Department of Education and our other partners, looking at the opportunities that our school systems have created and the importance of them to pathways and various careers."

The current building, completed in 1971, lacks the infrastructure required to meet modern educational standards. The existing building is a pour-in-place concrete structure. The exposed waffle slab and concrete columns present significant challenges for necessary repairs and utility upgrades and impede wireless signal transmission, disrupting the educational process and compromising safety and security measures.

Many of the bathrooms are outdated and need major repairs. The libraries are also antiquated and not usable as multi-use spaces, with no quiet rooms or conference spaces for students. Several facilities within the schools, including the second floor of the library, also need to become ADA-compliant and accessible to people with mobility challenges.

"When I look back at the tour that Sen. Duff gave us some time ago about all the things that were wrong and needed to be fixed at the school, there was a laundry list of things," **said Darlene Young, Common Council President for the City of Norwalk.** "I'm so proud that we are moving forward with a new school on behalf of our students and future generations."

A new high school and P-TECH building will be equipped with updated infrastructure and technology that will not only support educational advancements but will also help ensure NPS adequately prepares students to thrive in an ever-evolving world and graduate future-ready.

"We have to ensure that we have facilities equipped to provide experiences that prepare scholars for the future and in order for us to do that we need more projects like the one seen here today," **said Dr. Alexandra Estrella, Superintendent of Norwalk Public Schools.**

"Although we may not be here to completely enjoy it, I am eager to see the direction the school will be taken in," **said Christian Pierre, senior at Norwalk High School.** "Personally, I am most excited for the new music department. From experience, we've practiced everywhere from remote parts of the school to the cafeteria to the gym, which hasn't been, it's been a struggle."

During Mayor Rilling's Administration, the City has prioritized the first major school construction projects in decades. In 2023, the City of Norwalk welcomed students to a brand-new, state-of-the-art Cranbury Elementary School, the City's first new school in over 50 years. Later this month, the City and NPS will also break ground on the South Norwalk School, which will be the community's first neighborhood school in over 40 years and is projected to open in the fall of 2025. In 2022, the City and NPS welcomed students to the completely renovated Jefferson Marine Science Elementary School and in 2020, they welcomed students to a newly renovated Ponus Ridge School campus, which included renovations of an existing middle school and the construction of an elementary school.

You can find the video recording from today's groundbreaking ceremony [here](#).

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