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## **The City of Norwalk was Awarded \$21.5 Million in State Grants to Enhance HVAC Systems at Six Norwalk Public Schools; Funding will Add Air Conditioning and Improve Air Quality**

**(Norwalk, Conn.)** Today, May 20, 2024, Mayor Rilling, Norwalk Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Alexandra Estrella and Senator Bob Duff, Senate Majority Leader announced that the State of Connecticut's Department of Administrative Services awarded the City of Norwalk more than \$21.5 million in grant funding to improve the heating and cooling systems in six Norwalk Public Schools. This investment underscores a commitment by the State and the City to help maximize student success by fostering optimal and equitable learning environments.

These much-needed enhancements will benefit the following Norwalk Public Schools:

- Brien McMahon High School
- Brookside Elementary School
- Marvin Elementary School
- Naramake Elementary School
- Rowayton Elementary School
- Silvermine Dual Language Magnet School

In collaboration with Norwalk Public Schools, the City identified these schools as the six priority projects in the District. The total estimated cost of these projects is approximately \$36 million. A special capital appropriation of approximately \$14.4 million by the City will fully fund the project.

The grant funding will go toward the installation, replacement or upgrading of heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems and other improvements to indoor air quality in school buildings. Such improvements aim to significantly elevate the educational experience, particularly during extreme weather conditions, ensuring that both students and educators can thrive in a comfortable teaching and learning environment.

"Upgrading our HVAC systems for our students and teachers has always been a major priority, as we want our children to have access to a healthy, clean, and equitable learning environment," **said Mayor Rilling**. "Since 2018, the City has upgraded HVAC systems in six of our schools, and now, with this additional \$21.5 million in grant funding from the State, we will be able to upgrade six additional schools. I want to thank Governor Lamont for making this grant possible and for prioritizing CT's education system and thank State Senator Bob Duff, who is always advocating for Norwalk and helped get our reimbursement rate up to 60% for all new school construction projects in Norwalk, saving the City millions and millions of dollars."

"Providing state funding for Norwalk schools to add air conditioning and improve indoor air quality is crucial for creating healthy learning environments that foster student success," **said CT Senate Majority Leader Bob Duff**. "Poor indoor air quality negatively impacts academic performance and overall well-being. State funding ensures that all schools, regardless of local economic disparities, have the resources necessary to implement effective air quality improvements, such as cooling, advanced ventilation systems, and air filtration. By investing in the health of our students through improved air quality, we not only enhance their learning capabilities but also promote long-term health and equity in education."

"By investing in the improvement of HVAC systems, we are investing in the comfort and well-being of our school community, creating environments conducive to focused and productive learning," **said Dr. Alexandra Estrella, Superintendent of Norwalk Public Schools**. "With these upcoming improvements, we are taking proactive steps to ensure that interruptions to the educational process due to extreme temperatures become a thing of the past. Our scholars deserve to learn and succeed in environments where they can focus on their studies without the distraction of discomfort."

Previously, improvements to HVAC systems were not reimbursable by the State of Connecticut. In 2022, the State implemented a new HVAC grant program, allowing municipalities the opportunity to submit grant proposals to be selected for HVAC upgrades. The City of Norwalk is fortunate to have received HVAC grant funding at the State's newly approved reimbursement rate of 60% for new school construction projects in Norwalk, saving the City millions of dollars.

Since 2018, the City has invested capital funding into upgrading HVAC systems at several schools across the City, including Cranbury Elementary School, Jefferson Marine Science Elementary School, Kendall College and Career Academy, Nathan Hale Middle School, Roton Middle School and Ponus Ridge School Campus.

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