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**For Immediate Release**

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***Mayor Rilling and Senator Duff Announce Plans to Build a New West Rocks Middle School***

**(Norwalk, Conn.)** Today, Monday, September 29, 2025, Mayor Rilling and Senator Duff announced that West Rocks Middle School is proposed to be the next school to receive an upgraded facility with the construction of a new state-of-the-art building. In 2022, Senator Duff announced that new school construction projects in the City of Norwalk would receive a 60% reimbursement rate by the State over the next 25 years. The West Rocks Middle School is now part of the City of Norwalk's 25-year plan for new and upgraded school facilities at this reimbursement rate, which is also supported by Rep. Lucy Dathan, Rep. Dominique Johnson, Rep. Kadeem Roberts and Rep. Travis Simms.

In 2021, the Norwalk Board of Education commissioned a district-wide feasibility study of all the City's school buildings. The results demonstrated that West Rocks Middle School was most in need of repairs and improvements. The study found that the building was nearing the end of its anticipated service life and that there was a need for upgraded facilities and classrooms to better meet the evolving needs of today's student population.

Based on this information, the City and Norwalk Public Schools determined that West Rocks Middle School should be the next new school construction project following the completion of the new Norwalk High School, which is projected to open in the fall of 2027. The City anticipates a two-year construction period, with the facility ready to welcome students in the Fall of 2030.

"West Rocks Middle School is well overdue for an upgrade. In fact, I attended that exact same school decades ago. Our students need a modern, state-of-the-art school, where they can learn, grow and become best prepared for the future. Our kids are our most precious resource, and it's imperative that we continue to invest in them and their future by creating learning environments that foster the highest level of engagement," **said Mayor Rilling**. Thanks to our partnership with the State, we are receiving a 60% reimbursement rate on new school construction projects, including the new West Rocks School, which will save the City millions of dollars."

"This project represents the very best of what we can achieve when the state and city work together for our kids," **said Senator Duff**. "Norwalk's 2021 district-wide facilities study identified West Rocks Middle School as one of the district's most urgent priorities, and the need for a new building is clear. Representatives Dathan, Simms, Roberts, and Johnson, and I secured an unprecedented 60 percent state reimbursement, which is nearly triple the typical 22.5 percent rate. This funding will allow us to deliver a modern, secure, and inspiring school at a fraction of the cost to Norwalk taxpayers. The new West Rocks Middle School will replace aging infrastructure with state-of-the-art classrooms, collaboration spaces, and flexible learning areas that will serve students for years to come. It is a major win for our families and just one part of our citywide plan to make a once-in-a-generation investment in our school infrastructure."

West Rocks Middle School was originally constructed in 1956, with a floor area of 100,508 square feet. The feasibility study recommends that the new school implement a new century educational program, further augmented by various spaces, including science labs, specialized instructional spaces dedicated to various special education programs, resource rooms to accommodate independent and small group learning environments, and an outdoor learning space. Based on the State's space standard for schools, the new school building will be approximately 121,838 square feet.

The new school is expected to be constructed on the portion of the existing site currently occupied by the athletic fields, which, based on the field turf's wear and tear, will be ready for replacement. Utilizing the site's existing topographic relief, a multi-level facility can be constructed without impeding the operation of the existing school, avoiding disruptions to students' current learning environment. The new school will be designed to serve a student population of approximately 720. Each grade will have five standard classrooms, and each classroom will have a 24-student capacity.

In addition to West Rocks, the City of Norwalk has made a number of recent upgrades to schools throughout the community. In 2020, the City welcomed students to a newly renovated Ponus Ridge School. In 2022, it welcomed students to a completely renovated Jefferson Elementary School. In 2023, it welcomed students to a brand-new, state-of-the-art Cranbury Elementary School, the City's first entirely new school in over 50 years. Most recently, in August, the City welcomed students to the brand-new, state-of-the-art South Norwalk Elementary School, the City's first school construction project under the new 60 percent reimbursement rate. In the Fall of 2027, the City plans to welcome students into the new Norwalk High School, which is receiving an 80 percent reimbursement rate from the State.

In addition to these new schools and upgraded facilities, in 2024, the City secured \$21.5 million through a State grant to improve the heating and cooling systems at six more schools: Brien McMahon High School, Brookside Elementary School, Marvin Elementary School, Naramake Elementary School, Rowayton Elementary School, and Silvermine Dual Language Magnet School. These projects are now underway and will continue into 2026.

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