



South Windsor Board of Education
COMMUNITY UPDATE—JANUARY 2020
Elementary Schools Master Plan: Phase Three

To Town of South Windsor Residents and Families:

In October 2013, the Board of Education adopted the South Windsor Public Schools Ten-Year Elementary Facilities Master Plan to address our aging elementary school buildings. The Plan called for a three-phased approach using multiple referenda to address the town's elementary facilities needs over a span of ten years. In August 2017, we successfully completed Phase One with the construction of a new Orchard Hill Elementary School on time and under budget! We are closing in on the end of Phase Two with the opening of two newly constructed buildings for Eli Terry and Philip R. Smith in August 2020. And now, we have progressed to Phase Three which calls for the construction of a new elementary school for Pleasant Valley. On October 22, 2019, the Board approved the Educational Specifications and budget for Phase Three. In January, the Board will ask the Town Council to schedule a referendum on March 10, 2020, to seek voter approval to borrow for the project cost of the remaining new Phase Three school.

Since the inception of the Ten-Year Plan in 2013, Board members and Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Kate Carter, have remained committed to providing community members with clear and timely information regarding the progress of our plan. It is important that our community is kept informed about the plan's progress and has the information needed to make an informed decision at the March 2020 referendum. This mailing is intended to provide you with information concerning Phase Three of the Plan, including the project budget and the associated tax implications for community members. We also offer a closer look at how things have changed since the plan's inception, particularly how South Windsor has become a beacon for families seeking high quality schools which has led to a significant increase in enrollment.

As we have reiterated throughout this process, school construction projects are about much more than brick and mortar. The success to-date of the Ten-Year Elementary Facilities Master Plan serves as a powerful reminder that our community wisely invests in the future of our children, enthusiastically champions public education, and is willing to work together to serve the greater good. It is critical that as we near the end of this very important project, we come together once more as a community to ensure that all students in South Windsor have equitable access to high quality, safe and engaging learning environments.

We hope you will take a few minutes to consider the information in this mailing and join us in celebrating what we as a community have accomplished for our children and their futures. Together, we CAN make a difference! Thank you in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

The South Windsor Board of Education

Craig Zimmerman, Chairman
Jessica Waterhouse, Vice Chair
Beth Esstman, Secretary
Art Adduci
Anitha Elango

Michael Gonzalez
Marek Kozikowski
James O'Brien
Michael Paré





A LOOK AT THE FINAL PHASE OF THE TEN-YEAR PLAN PHASE THREE: PLEASANT VALLEY ELEMENTARY

On October 22, 2019, the South Windsor Board of Education approved the Phase Three Educational Specifications (Ed Specs) and a project budget for the new Pleasant Valley Elementary School. The Ed Specs serve as a “roadmap” for school design, and outline the spaces required to meet student and staff needs in a comprehensive school setting. These spaces include core classrooms for students in grades K-5; spaces for art and music, STEM, Special Education, and intervention/support services; a library/media center; gymnasium; and cafeteria. With the exception of a larger gymnasium, the Ed Specs prepared for Pleasant Valley are comparable to the Ed Specs for Phase One and Phase Two schools.

Pleasant Valley is currently dependent on the use of eight portable classrooms (and expects to add three additional portables) to accommodate its growing student population. In order to ensure equitable access to high quality education resources for all South Windsor students, it is critical that this new school is built as part of Phase Three.

Through proactive planning for Phase Three, the South Windsor Town Council approved the purchase of two parcels of land which abut the Pleasant Valley campus. This offers the space and flexibility needed to construct the new school building on the existing site, and allows Pleasant Valley students and staff to remain in their current building during construction.

The Preschool (POP and IPOP) program originally located at the new Orchard Hill School was moved in August 2018 to temporary space at the middle school due to an unexpected surge in K-5 enrollment at Orchard Hill. The Preschool program has been included in the Phase Three design for Pleasant Valley, and these students and staff will also move to the new building in 2023.

If the March referendum is approved, construction of a new PK-5 school would begin on the existing Pleasant Valley site in the spring of 2022, and the new school would open for students and staff in August 2023.

A New Building for Pleasant Valley is Critical!

Current building cannot accommodate the projected number of students

Reliant on eleven (11) portable classrooms until new building opens

Enrollment at opening expected to be 340 more K-5 students than was projected when Ten-Year Plan was developed

Improved site safety needed for pedestrians and vehicles

Equitable resources for ALL elementary students is imperative

Pre-School program needs a permanent home

No school left behind!



Due to increasing enrollment, Pleasant Valley will be dependent on the use of 11 portable classrooms to accommodate its growing population until its new building can be constructed.

PHASE THREE PROJECT OVERVIEW

School:	Pleasant Valley
Type:	New Construction
Size:	101,288 s.f.
Project Budget:	\$58.5M
K-5 Enrollment:	696
PreK Enrollment:	110 (am and pm programs)
School Opening:	August 2023

PROJECT COST AND TAX IMPLICATIONS

The budget approved by the Board of Education for Phase Three includes an overall cost of \$58.5 million, of which approximately \$21 million is estimated to be eligible for reimbursement by the state. The town's share after reimbursement is estimated to be approximately \$37.5 million.

The following table was prepared by South Windsor Town Manager, Michael Maniscalco. Due to the retirement of existing bonded debt, there will be only four years (2025 through 2028) of the 20-year term where the new debt service of Phase Three will exceed the amount of existing debt service for old debt that will be retired. In other words, Phase Three construction will cause the mill rate to increase only in the four years noted below. It is important to note that the table below is based upon existing debt service and assumes no expenditure, revenue or grand list growth.

Incremental Tax Impact of Phase Three Based on Home Values

Home Market Value	Taxable Assessment	2025	2026	2027	2028	Total Cost	Average Annual Cost	Average Monthly Cost
200,000	140,000	\$21.00	\$29.40	\$26.60	\$32.20	\$109.20	\$27.30	\$2.28
250,000	175,000	\$26.25	\$36.75	\$33.25	\$40.25	\$136.50	\$34.13	\$2.84
300,000	210,000	\$31.50	\$44.10	\$39.90	\$48.30	\$163.80	\$40.95	\$3.41
350,000	245,000	\$36.75	\$51.45	\$46.55	\$56.35	\$191.10	\$47.78	\$3.98
400,000	280,000	\$42.00	\$58.80	\$53.20	\$64.40	\$218.40	\$54.60	\$4.55
450,000	315,000	\$47.25	\$66.15	\$59.85	\$72.45	\$245.70	\$61.43	\$5.12
500,000	350,000	\$52.50	\$73.50	\$66.50	\$80.50	\$273.00	\$68.25	\$5.69
Mill Rate Increase:		0.15	0.21	0.19	0.23			

PROJECT OVERVIEW: PHASE ONE AND PHASE TWO



PHASE ONE

Orchard Hill Elementary

New Construction
 Opened: August 2017
 Size: 71,200 s.f.
 Project Budget: \$33.5M
 Design Enrollment: 576

On time and under budget!



PHASE TWO

Eli Terry Elementary

New Construction
 Opening: August 2020
 Size: 67,000 s.f.
 Project Budget: \$37.4M
 Design Enrollment: 463



PHASE TWO

Philip R. Smith Elementary

New Construction
 Opening: August 2020
 Size: 60,700 s.f.
 Project Budget: \$32.5M
 Design Enrollment: 399

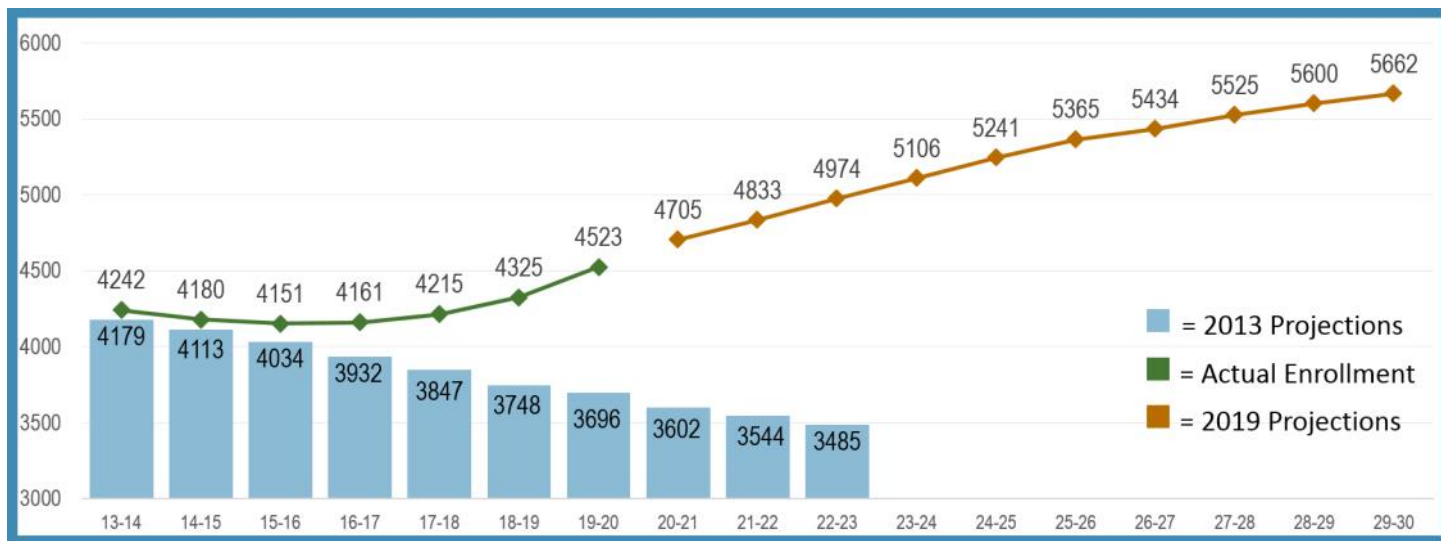
GRAND OPENING AUGUST 2020

SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

When the Ten-Year Plan was created in 2013, South Windsor had been experiencing declining enrollment for more than a decade. In the 2016-2017 school year, we began to see a change in this trajectory; over the past three years, we have continued to experience a significant departure from this trend, particularly in our elementary schools.

Updated enrollment projections were recently provided to the Board of Education by our demographer, Milone & MacBroom. The blue bars in the chart below reflect projected PK-12 enrollment data that was provided in 2013 for the development of the Ten-Year Plan. By contrast, the green trend line illustrates the actual enrollment since 2013, and the orange line reflects the new enrollment trajectory calculated in November 2019.

Historical and Projected PK-12 District Enrollment



Demographers have pointed to high levels of in-migration – people coming to South Windsor from other towns, states and countries – as one of the reasons that forecasting enrollment in South Windsor has been challenging. As it relates to the town’s economy and infrastructure, this growth has been characterized as “a good problem to have.” South Windsor is known for its commitment to education, and families are moving here for our schools. We are predicted to have 843 more K-5 students at the conclusion of the Ten-Year Plan than was originally forecast in 2013. The staggered approach of our Ten-Year Plan has provided the flexibility needed to adapt to this influx of new students.

K-5 Enrollment Projections: Then and Now

	2013 Enrollment Projection for 2023-2024	2019 Enrollment Projection for 2023-2024	Difference
Eli Terry	384	490	+ 106
Orchard Hill	424	698	+ 274
Philip R. Smith	340	463	+ 123
Pleasant Valley	356	696	+ 340
Totals	1,504	2,347	+ 843

K-5 enrollment projections for 2023 (when the Ten-Year Plan is complete) have changed dramatically for all four elementary schools since the Plan’s inception

TEN-YEAR PLAN AT A GLANCE: TRACKING OUR PROGRESS TO-DATE

The Ten-Year Timeline document was created in 2013 to provide the community with a conceptual long-range plan reflecting the tasks and milestones involved in the preparation and completion of the three phases of the Plan. Since 2013, this publication has been updated three times to reflect the completion of Phase One, refreshed enrollment projections, updates to Phase Two, and modifications to the Plan for Phase Three. The latest version of the timeline was approved by the Board of Education in February 2019. While the full version is available on our website, the following provides a condensed summary of the Ten-Year Timeline inclusive of progress through 2019-2020.

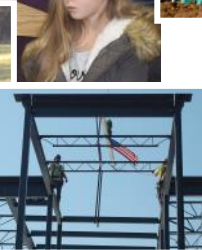


<p>PHASE ONE: Referendum Year</p> <p>2013-2014</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First year of full day kindergarten for South Windsor Public Schools • Three portables removed from Philip R. Smith due to unsafe conditions • Asbestos removed from Pleasant Valley • Ed Specs and project budget for Orchard Hill approved by Board of Education • Phase One Referendum passed by community members in March 2014
<p>2014-2015</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff involved in programming design meetings for new Orchard Hill • Information sessions held for elementary families and community members • Planning meetings held for the repurposing and transition of Wapping
<p>2015-2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orchard Hill students remained in original OH building • Planned for Pre-K move from Eli Terry to new Orchard Hill in Fall 2017 • Conducted transportation analysis, and began planning redistricting for students and staff • Staff involved in development of Ed Specs for Eli Terry and Philip R. Smith
<p>PHASE TWO: Referendum Year</p> <p>2016-2017</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orchard Hill students remained in original OH building • Orchard Hill construction completed April 2017 • Prepared for classroom and building moves, as well as K-5 staff transfers districtwide • Prepared original Wapping building for use by town departments and South Windsor High School • Ed Specs and project budgets for Eli Terry and Philip R. Smith approved by Board of Education • Phase Two Referendum passed by community members in March 2017
<p>2017-2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Orchard Hill School opened August 2017! • Wapping building used for new SWHS Culinary Arts and Alternative Ed programs • Parks and Rec Department and Town's Building Maintenance moved to Wapping • Design phase of new Eli Terry and Philip R. Smith schools • Portable classrooms installed at Pleasant Valley to accommodate increased enrollment
<p>2018-2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original Orchard Hill building served as swing space for Philip R. Smith • PreK program relocated to TEMS to accommodate increased enrollment at Orchard Hill • Eli Terry students and staff remained in original Eli Terry building • Information sessions held for Eli Terry and Philip R. Smith families and property abutters • Original Philip R. Smith building demolished • Construction for Eli Terry and Philip R. Smith began in Spring 2019 • Town acquired land adjacent to existing Pleasant Valley to increase flexibility of site • Closely monitored enrollment at all schools • Staff involved in development of Ed Specs for new Pleasant Valley
<p>PHASE THREE: Referendum Year</p> <p>2019-2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eli Terry students and staff remain in original Eli Terry building • Philip R. Smith students and staff attend swing space location • Ed Specs and project budget for Pleasant Valley approved by Board of Education • Construction of new Eli Terry and Philip R. Smith schools expected to be complete in Spring 2020 • Phase Three Referendum to be held in March 2020 • Prepare for classroom moves to new buildings • Original Eli Terry building to be demolished in Summer 2020 • Install additional portables at Pleasant Valley to accommodate increased enrollment

Ten-Year Plan Completion will occur with the opening of the new Pleasant Valley School in August 2023!



A large part of the success-to-date of the Ten-Year Plan has been the inclusion of the entire South Windsor community in all of the projects' milestones: groundbreaking, beam signing, topping off and ribbon cutting. Every event has been attended by members of the Board of Education, Town Council and Public Building Commission, as well as state senators, state representatives and other dignitaries from state government. Design, construction and other project professionals have also been on hand at every celebration, participating as enthusiastically as students, parents and staff. And no matter which school has been the focus of a milestone celebration, each event has been supported by principals and student ambassadors from all four elementary schools in order to convey that everyone has a vested interest in the entirety of the Ten-Year Plan. This sense of unity and purpose has resulted in parents, grandparents and community members from all four districts not only celebrating in these milestones, but championing the plan's success as well.





TEN-YEAR PLAN: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Didn't our residents already vote to approve the entire plan?

No. This Plan was divided into three phases, offering a staggered approach to referenda. In March 2014, residents voted on Phase One, the new Orchard Hill. In March 2017, residents voted on Phase Two which included both Eli Terry and Philip R. Smith. Residents are now being asked to vote on the final Phase Three project, Pleasant Valley, in March 2020.

What was the level of community support in the Phase One and Phase Two referenda?

Of those residents who went to the polls, 75% voted in favor of Phase One, and 77% voted in favor of Phase Two.

What is the status of the Phase Two schools?

As of January 2020, 45% of Eli Terry's construction, and 55% of Philip R. Smith's construction, has been completed. Substantial completion of both buildings is scheduled for the end of May 2020. The existing Eli Terry school will be demolished during the summer of 2020. Both projects are currently on schedule and on budget.

Has increasing enrollment affected the Ten-Year Plan?

Yes. Fortunately, the staggered approach to construction has provided much needed flexibility, and allowed for adjustments to be made along the way. For example, additional classrooms were added to both Phase Two schools; the size of the Pleasant Valley building will be larger than originally expected; and the preschool program originally located at the new Orchard Hill will now be located at the new Pleasant Valley.

How does the community at large benefit from new schools?

High quality schools protect property values: realtors routinely cite the quality of our school system as a vehicle for promoting home ownership in South Windsor. The plan has also offered some win-wins for those who sought dedicated space for senior citizens and for the recreation department. Specific to Phase Three, Pleasant Valley will offer a larger gymnasium that will be able to better serve youth sports in our community.

What do new schools offer that our existing schools do not?

In addition to an improved instructional space for teaching and learning, new schools offer ADA compliance, modern technology, enhanced school security features, more efficient utilities, environmentally conscious designs, improved air quality, safer traffic patterns, and climate controlled spaces.

How are school construction projects funded?

In Connecticut, local school construction projects are typically paid for through a combination of bonded debt issued by the State of Connecticut and the municipality building the school. The municipality pays for its share of the design and construction costs, typically by issuing short-term notes. As construction continues, the state begins reimbursing the municipality through "progress payments" for its share of project costs that are deemed to be reimbursable. The reimbursement rate varies from town to town, ranging from a low of 10% to a high of 80% as determined by project type and relative wealth rank of the town. When construction is complete and the municipality has received all eligible reimbursement, the short-term notes are converted to long-term municipal bonds, ranging from a 20 to 30-year term.

What is South Windsor's reimbursement rate?

The state's reimbursement rate for new construction for Phase One was 34.64%. For both Phase Two projects, the state's reimbursement rate for new construction in South Windsor is 37.14%. The reimbursement rate for Phase Three will be 37.86%.

What is "Support South Windsor Schools.org"?

At times we receive calls in the Board of Education offices from citizens wanting to know how to become involved with the school referendum committee. It is important to note that the referendum committee is an organization separate from the South Windsor Board of Education. Community members interested in learning more can visit their website at: www.supportsouthwindsorschools.org.



South Windsor Board of Education

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Where can I find more information?

Information relating to the Ten-Year Elementary Facilities Master Plan, including past newsletters, photos, documents presented to the Board of Education and videos of Board of Education meetings, can be found on our website:

www.southwindsorschools.org/elementaryfacilities

SOUTH WINDSOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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