

Rocky Hill Public Schools

news Fall 2010

Information for Rocky Hill Residents from the Board of Education

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A Message from the Board of Education

As part of our continued effort to maintain open lines of communication with all residents of Rocky Hill, we are establishing a Board of Education newsletter. Our goal is to inform you of the major issues our school district faces and to let you know how our students, teachers and community address them.

One area we are focusing on is the conditions of our school buildings, as many of you will recall from recent town-wide referendums. These buildings have served our students well for decades, but several of them require significant updates in order to provide our children with an effective, efficient, well-equipped environment for learning.

We recognize that both referendums were voted down. Going forward, we will consider new options that are acceptable and worthwhile for the long-term needs of our community and children. The Board of Education is responsible for providing a quality education for the children of families living in Rocky Hill and will continue to focus on the buildings and facilities where our students learn since they have a significant impact on their learning experience and future careers. Quality school buildings attract highly qualified teachers and provide students with tools and environments that are conducive to 21st century learning. These qualities in our schools, in turn, make Rocky Hill an attractive place to live, work and raise a family.

We need your opinion and support in order to offer the best possible alternative to modernize our school facilities. Inside this newsletter is a survey for you to fill-out and return by December 10, 2010. It will help us understand your thoughts and opinions on education in our town and help us provide you with the information necessary to make an informed decision on school renovations and educational goals. The postage is already paid and your responses are completely anonymous. A summary of the results will be published in a future newsletter. **We ask that you complete the enclosed survey by December 10, 2010.**

Also in this issue, we share some of the achievements of our students. Thanks to the commitment of our teachers and our community over time, our students are continually scoring better on standardized tests, maintaining a high graduation rate of 96% and continuing their education at some of the best universities in the country.

Questions & Answers on School Building Plans

This Q&A is an effort to provide you with an overview of board activities to date in regards to the long range plan for the school district.

1. What is the Board's process for formulating the next recommendation to the community?

A subcommittee of the Board of Education, the Facilities Subcommittee, meets regularly to address repairs, maintenance and improvements to our school buildings. Based on the subcommittee's reports on the conditions of our schools, the Board is in the process of understanding how the Rocky Hill community wants to address them. The schools are a shared resource, so any major decision to improve them needs to be approved by a majority of our town.

The Board has published this newsletter and the enclosed survey to raise awareness of the needs of the schools and to give every resident an opportunity to have an open dialog with us before we make our next recommendation. The information you provide will be analyzed and used to identify a school facility plan that meets the educational needs of our students while also addressing the expectations of the community. Once a new plan is developed, the Board of Education will host meetings at each school to share the plan with the community and prepare for a referendum.

2. Why doesn't the Board just address the known Life Safety (e.g. fire codes, indoor air quality and other building codes) and Handicapped Accessibility issues and hold off on other renovations?

To clearly answer this question, the Board of Education commissioned a study conducted by the architectural firm Friar and Associates in collaboration with O&G Industries. These firms conducted a thorough investigation of our school buildings and provided us with cost estimates for addressing only the Life Safety and Handicapped Accessibility (Americans with Disabilities Act or ADA) code requirements for each of our three elementary schools. They found that the complexity of the new building code requirements combined with the advanced age of our schools would require a very

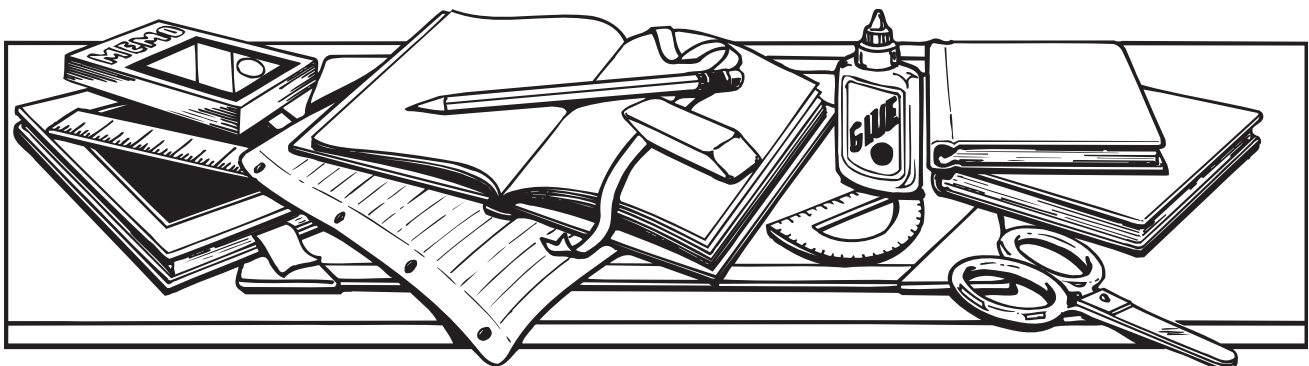
large investment. At Stevens Elementary School, such work is anticipated to cost more than \$11 million. Similar work at a Moser Elementary School would cost \$5.4 million (\$65,000 per student). West Hill Elementary School repairs are estimated at more than \$13 million. Although these renovations would make our schools compliant, they would not address important educational issues that we are grappling with, such as not having enough classroom space, and instead using portable classrooms, storage closets, and other alternatives to teach our children. The Board of Education has determined that the community would receive a greater long-term value by addressing the educational needs, the building code and life safety issues simultaneously.

3. What opportunities do community members have to learn about the Board's plans?

Members of the community are encouraged to attend Board of Education Facility Subcommittee meetings, which are open to the public. You may also view and download the reports and meeting minutes at the Rocky Hill Public Schools web site (www.rockyhillps.com). The Board of Education held tours of school buildings this summer and is currently planning additional walkthroughs. Notice of these events will be published in local newspapers and announced during Board of Education meetings. These meetings are broadcast on local access television on the third Thursday of each month.

4. How long will the Board take to make a decision?

This depends on the feedback we receive from the community and a thorough review of what educational areas need to be addressed and recommended. The Board will review and integrate the results of the survey along with other objective (educators, community leaders, state requirements, etc.) input into a plan that meets the needs of Rocky Hill children. Over the course of several weeks, the Board will also present the details of the plan at in-person meetings so that community members have an opportunity to fully understand the reasons for our decision and so that they can make an informed decision when we present the plan for referendum.



CMT Scores

Rocky Hill Public Schools students continue to achieve high scores on Connecticut’s standardized tests. The Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) is one of the tests that the state uses to evaluate the performance of each school district. It measures math, reading, and writing skills in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8, as well as science skills in grades 5 and 8. With diverse learning abilities in our schools, we are always striving for improvements, but we are pleased to report that Rocky Hill scores better than similar districts and significantly better than state averages.

2009-2010 Connecticut Mastery Test Scores for Rocky Hill Public Schools

	Math		Reading		Writing		Science	
	Rocky Hill	State	Rocky Hill	State	Rocky Hill	State	Rocky Hill	State
Grade 3	91%	84%	82%	72%	89%	80%	Not Tested	
Grade 4	97%	85%	87%	73%	96%	87%	Not Tested	
Grade 5	95%	88%	84%	75%	92%	87%	91%	83%
Grade 6	96%	88%	96%	86%	93%	86%	Not Tested	
Grade 7	97%	87%	99%	85%	92%	80%	Not Tested	
Grade 8	95%	87%	95%	83%	94%	81%	89%	76%

The latest version of the CMTs, the “Fourth Generation CMT”, has been given since 2006. Rocky Hill students have demonstrated significant growth in most subject areas and grade levels. To learn more about the test and to see detailed scores for each grade levels and each subject, visit our web site, www.rockyhillps.com.

2010 Graduates and Colleges

Our talented graduates have begun the next phase of their education.

Ninety-one percent of the graduating class will be attending 4-year and 2-year colleges. They are concentrating in diverse fields as they prepare for careers in engineering, science, education, music, business and many other areas. The colleges our graduates are attending include:

Adelphi University
 Babson College
 Bay Path College
 Baylor University
 Bentley University
 Berklee College of Music
 Boston University
 Brandeis University
 Briarwood College
 Capital Community College

Castleton State College
 CCSU
 Central Connecticut State University
 College of Saint Rose
 College of the Holy Cross
 Curry College
 Drexel University
 Eastern Connecticut State University
 ECSU
 Emmanuel College
 Endicott College
 Fairfield University
 Florida Institute of Technology
 Georgia Perimeter College
 Georgia Southwestern State University
 High Point University
 Hofstra University
 International Institute of Cosmetology
 LIM College

Lincoln College of New England
 Lincoln Culinary Institute
 Lincoln Technical Institute
 Lycoming College
 Lyndon State College
 Manchester Community College
 Middlesex Community College
 Mitchell College
 New England Institute of Technology
 New York University
 Newbury College
 Northeastern University
 Pace University
 PENN State University
 Pennsylvania State University, University Park
 Post University

(continued on page 4)

The Rocky Hill Community Survey

Dear Resident:

We would like to know what you think about Rocky Hill Public Schools and the capital improvements plans that we have recommended in recent referendums. Please take a few minutes to fill out this self-mailer postage-paid short survey. Your opinion is important to us and will help determine what we recommend to the community in the future. All responses are anonymous and will be kept strictly confidential. Highlights of the survey results will be published in the next Board newsletter and the complete results will be made available for review at the board of education office. Please fold according to instructions and mail back by December 10, 2010.

Please use a PEN to fill in circles completely like this: ● not like this: ☑ ☒ ☑ **FOR OFFICE USE ONLY Survey #** _____

1. Did you vote in the June 8th referendum on improving Rocky Hill Public Schools buildings?

Yes No

2. Did you vote to support the June 2010 referendum?

Yes No

3. If you voted "no", what was the reason? (Select only one.)

- I didn't have enough information.
- The proposed improvements were unnecessary.
- The proposed costs were too high.
- I didn't understand why the high school renovations were included.
- Other reason. (Include comments at end of the survey.)

In questions 4 through 6, indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements about Rocky Hill Public Schools capital improvement needs.

4. I supported the Board of Education's decision to investigate the need for improvements to our schools.

Agree Disagree Not Sure

5. Rocky Hill effectively communicated current and future goals for the capital improvement project.

Agree Disagree Not Sure

6. I had adequate information to make an informed decision about the proposed capital improvements.

Agree Disagree Not Sure

In questions 7 through 9, consider the schools' renovation/addition proposals.

7. Is there a significant relationship between the quality of Rocky Hill Public Schools and property values?

Yes No

8. Are you aware of the proposed benefits of building a new elementary school on the Moser site?

Yes No

9. Are you aware that the State will reimburse Rocky Hill up to 44% of the cost of these renovations?

Yes No

10. Please rank the following choices in order of priority, as the Board of Education prepares its recommendation for addressing our school building needs. Fill in one circle each for your #1, #2 and #3 priority. #1 = top priority. Do not fill in more than one circle per line.

- | 1st | 2nd | 3rd | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | A. Build a new elementary school. |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | B. Renovate the elementary schools. |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | C. Renovate the high school. |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | D. Other: _____ |

11. What information about our schools would you need to know prior to making an informed decision about Rocky Hill Public Schools? (Select all that apply)

- Educational goals and outcomes (test scores, curriculum, technology abilities)
- Detailed cost estimates
- Property tax implications
- The community's future cultural and recreation needs
- Other (Include comments at end of the survey.)

12. Where do you CURRENTLY get your information about Rocky Hill Public Schools? (Select all that apply)

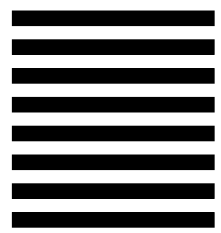
- Rocky Hill Public Schools web site
- Public access cable television
- Town/school employees
- Friends, neighbors, students
- Public meetings
- Hartford Courant
- Local media
- Radio
- Rocky Hill Life
- Other (Include comments at end of the survey.)



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13. How would you PREFER to get your information about Rocky Hill Public Schools? (Select all that apply)

- Town or School District newsletters
- Rocky Hill Public Schools web site
- Public meetings
- Hartford Courant
- Rocky Hill Life
- Local media
- Radio
- Public access cable television
- Town/school employees
- Friends, neighbors, students
- Other (Include comments at the end of the survey.)

14. The Board of Education effectively communicates about Rocky Hill Public Schools.

- Agree
- Disagree
- Not Sure

15. Please indicate the closest timeframe to when you last visited the Rocky Hill Public Schools web site?

- Never
- Within last year
- Within last month

16. How many years have you lived in Rocky Hill?

- Less than 2 years
- 2 - 10 years
- 11 - 20 years
- More than 20 years

17. What is your head of household's employment status?

- Employed
- Retired
- Unemployed
- Stay-at-home

18. Do you have children in the public schools?

- Yes
- No

19. Please indicate the number of children you have in each grade.

	1	2	1	2
K	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1st	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2nd	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3rd	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4th	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5th	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6th	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

20. Do you own or rent your home?

- Own house
- Own condo
- Rent

21. Please use the space below for additional comments:

(continued from page 3)

2010 Grads

Quinnipiac University
Quinsigamond Comm. College
Roanoke College
Rochester Institute of Technology
Roger Williams University
Saint Francis University
Saint Joseph College
Salve Regina University
Savannah College of Art & Design
Southern Connecticut
State University
Springfield College
St. John's University
Stonehill College
Stonybrook University
Suffolk University
Suffolk University
Temple University
The College of Saint Rose
The University of Alabama
Tunxis Community College
Union College
University of Alabama
University of Central Florida
University of Connecticut
University of Hartford
University of Kentucky
University of New Haven
University of Rhode Island
Villanova University
Western Connecticut State University
Western New England College
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

***We wish all of our graduates
the best of luck in their
future pursuits.***

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