

New Bedford breaks ground on new south end School

Mayor Jon Mitchell, members of the New Bedford City Council and School Committee, the Executive Director of the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Jack McCarthy and Superintendent Pia Durkin ceremonially broke ground at the site of a new state-of-the-art elementary school in New Bedford's South End.

The new elementary school is being constructed at the site of the old John B. Hannigan Elementary School which is bordered by Emma, Emery and Freeman Streets. The new elementary school, scheduled to open in September of 2017, will serve an estimated 400 students from Kindergarten through Grade 5. It will offer a sweeping view of Clark's Cove and will include spacious modern classrooms, a 21st century library/media center, a community reading room, a full-size indoor gym, two Pre-K classrooms, a parent resource room, outdoor basketball courts, and a nautical playground, among other features.

Back in February of 2013, Mayor Jon Mitchell launched a plan to kick-start New Bedford's stalled school building projects. Mayor Mitchell's plan called for the replacement of two elementary schools that serve the families of the south end, Hannigan and William H. Taylor Elementary School.

"I saw a real need for modern elementary school facilities in the South End—and our kids deserve them. My plan proposed moving Taylor into an expanded Sea Lab Marine Science Center building and constructing a new school at the Hannigan site. With today's groundbreaking ceremony, the Hannigan Project moves from the planning and design phase into the construction phase," said Mayor Mitchell.

"I am pleased that with the support of the MSBA and the City

Council, we are able to deliver modern educational facilities for our students and teachers while maximizing the use of state funds and minimizing our local share of the projects," he continued.

"We are excited that next year, our Hannigan School students will enter a beautiful, modern new school equipped for today's technology and the very best teaching and learning for all kids," said Dr. Durkin.

Ward Six City Councilor Joe Lopes said, "With the construction of this elementary school we are bringing an anchor back to the neighborhood and we are giving our children and teachers a state-of-the-art facility where learning can take place."

With the City Council's support and the approval of the MSBA, the state has covered 90% of the eligible costs of the Taylor construction project and 80% of the eligible costs for the construction of the new elementary school at the Hannigan site. The total cost of the Hannigan Project is \$36.7 million with the state providing \$22.7 million and the City's share being \$14 million.