

Senator Montigny breaks ground on new Gomes School playground

Senate Assistant Majority Leader Mark Montigny (D-New Bedford) on Friday, May 6th joined local teachers, students, and parents to break ground on the new playground at the Alfred J. Gomes Elementary School in New Bedford.

Several years ago, the previous facility was destroyed after a devastating fire rendered the equipment unsafe and unsuitable for children's use. The newly constructed playground will boast equipment that is freely accessible to the community and children with disabilities.

Funding for the project was made possible through a \$60,000 budget earmark Senator Montigny secured in the FY16 state budget. Additionally, the school's Parent-Teacher Organization raised over \$16,000 over the past two years to raise awareness in the community and to jump start the project. The tireless advocacy of PTO officers and retired Gomes School teachers Beverly Tavares and Rosa Goncalves garnered the attention and unwavering support of Senator Montigny. The Gomes School playground will build upon the success of the construction of the handicap-accessible "Wishing Rock" playground in Buttonwood Park, which Senator Montigny named to reflect childhood memories and led efforts to secure state funding in 2007.



“Providing all local children with a safe and inviting place to have fun and spend invaluable time with their families not only enriches their lives but also strengthens our community,” said Senator Montigny. “I look forward to the swift completion of this project and want to thank the tremendous support from the PT0, school administration and community leaders that have ensured the success of this playground.”

Beverly Tavares, President of the Gomes School PT0, stated, “Senator Montigny’s enthusiastic and steadfast support was crucial in bringing our C.L.I.M.B. Project to timely fruition. The P.T.O. would like to convey its sincere gratitude to the Senator for recognizing the importance of providing this community with a safe, year-round, family friendly playground that will benefit children of all ages and abilities.”

Rosa Goncalves added, “This is truly a dream come true and something that will impact not only the students enrolled at Gomes School, but everyone in the community. In addition to being PT0 members, we are also educators who know that strengthening a child’s body also helps develop healthy brains, and healthy brains equal better academic performance!”



"We are extremely excited to have a safe and accessible playground where all students of the Alfred J Gomes Elementary School can enjoy and engage positive social interactions through outdoor physical activity. We could not be more grateful to Senator Montigny , the Gomes School PTO spearheaded by retired Gomes School educators Beverly Tavares and Rosa Goncalves as well as our dedicated staff and families for all of their time and efforts in raising the funds to make this dream come true. It is a testament to the commitment that this community has to providing its children with what they both need and deserve."

"On behalf of the New Bedford Public Schools and the Gomes School community, we are grateful to Sen. Montigny for his commitment to our students at Gomes, as well as the dedication of Ms. Goncalves and Ms. Tavares for working so diligently on this project," said Superintendent Pia Durkin. "Every child in every neighborhood school in this city deserves a safe, accessible and fun playground and we are so pleased and thankful that the Gomes School playground has been restored back to a great space for our kids to use and enjoy."