

# Mayor Mitchell, City and State Leaders Break Ground on Taylor Elementary School Construction Project



*Addition to Sea Lab Marine Science Education Facility in City's South End Will Expand Building to Include the New William H. Taylor Elementary School*

Mayor Jon Mitchell and Executive Director of the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Jack McCarthy joined with members of the New Bedford School Committee and New Bedford City Council to celebrate the official ground breaking of the new William H. Taylor Elementary School.

In February of 2013, Mayor Mitchell launched a plan to kick-start New Bedford's stalled school building projects. Under the Mayor's plan, the two elementary schools that serve the families of the south end, Hannigan and Taylor, will be

replaced by moving Taylor into an expanded Sea Lab Marine Science building and a new school would be constructed for Hannigan. The City Council supported the Mayor's plan and MSBA subsequently agreed to cover 90% of the eligible costs of the \$12.5 million Taylor construction project and 80% of the eligible costs for the construction of a new Hannigan School. With today's groundbreaking ceremony, the Taylor School project moves into the construction phase.

"We need modern elementary school facilities in the South End—our kids deserve them. 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," said Mayor Jon Mitchell.

"There is broad consensus among parents, teachers and administrators that schools that are too large for the principal to know all the students' names are impersonal and not preferable to small neighborhood schools. Our school building plan reflects that community sentiment—we are investing in smaller schools that can function as institutional anchors to help strengthen neighborhoods, foster community, and allow for personal connections," he continued.

New Bedford is operating some of the oldest school buildings in the Commonwealth—the existing Taylor School is 117 years old.

"The new Taylor School will be a modern school dedicated to fostering excellent teaching and learning for every student," said Superintendent Pia Durkin. "A crucial component of any school is ensuring that educators have every resource and tool they need so that all children receive the very best education. Our kids in New Bedford deserve the best and new schools and technology advance teaching and learning for every child."

The renovation and expansion project will add approximately 26,000 square feet to the existing Sea Lab facility on Portland Street. The new addition and renovated spaces will house the Taylor School kindergarten through grade five and will have two classrooms per grade, plus a preschool classroom. Along with the added classroom spaces, the new addition and renovated areas will include a gym, a media center, an expanded service kitchen, and various offices and a faculty room. When construction is complete, the expanded facility on Portland Street will accommodate both the William H. Taylor Elementary School and Sea Lab.

Throughout the school year, the Sea Lab facility serves as a hands-on science learning site for visiting elementary students who attend science lab sessions on a rotating schedule throughout the year. During the summer months, Sea Lab offers an intensive schedule of science programming all day. The Sea Lab building is also serving as a temporary site for the John Hannigan Elementary School since the roof of the Hannigan School collapsed in 2006. Plans are underway to rebuild a new Hannigan school at its old location. Earlier this year, the MSBA agreed to cover 80% of eligible costs to construct a new Hannigan.

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