



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
WOONSOCKET, RHODE ISLAND

Mayor Lisa Baldelli-Hunt

Press Release

**Mayor Announces Her Support of the Proposed
Five-Year School Capital Improvement Plan**

April 8, 2015

WOONSOCKET, RI: Wednesday night, April 1, 2015, the ten-member School Building (Capital) Committee unveiled its proposed Five-Year School Capital Improvement Plan to the Woonsocket City Council and Woonsocket School Committee at a joint meeting in Harris Hall. The ten-member committee, chaired by Mr. Joel Mathews, Special Projects Administrator for the City, who serves as the Mayor's personal representative on the Committee, is comprised of members of the Woonsocket School Department and Committee, members of the City administration and City Council, as well as representation from the general public. The committee began by hiring the firm of Robinson Green Beretta to proceed with a comprehensive inspection of all nine schools by a battery of architects, engineers, HVAC, electrical, and roofing specialists. At the conclusion of their work, they presented detailed estimates for all of the work components to the committee.

The plan calls for making long-needed capital improvements to the City's nine schools and totals \$9.3 million to be expended over the next five years. The plan primarily consists of roof replacements, renovations to conform to code and other safety issues, removal of asbestos, the replacement of severely outdated windows, and other renovations. The majority of the cost of this work needed to fund the renovations will come from the 81-83% School/Housing Aid reimbursement received from the Rhode Island Department of Education. The Mayor noted that the program marks the preparation and adoption of a comprehensive funded School Capital Improvement Program, not done so in many years. She noted that under previous City administrations, the total local funding for capital repairs and improvements was severely cut, and had dwindled to only \$157,000 per year. This amount was absolutely inadequate to correct and maintain the nine public schools.

The Mayor was also pleased to note that due to recent changes in the School Aid formula, along with projected increased reimbursements due to the implementation of all-day kindergarten, the \$9.3 million in capital repairs can be funded within the current approximate \$16.1 million appropriation that is made by the City for the operations of the School Department, and will not need to be increased to fund the cost of the plan.

The Mayor emphasized that she is pleased that a plan has been developed that will help correct these long-term capital deficiencies in these buildings. This initiative, coupled with the municipal Capital Improvement Program currently being prepared by her Administration for all buildings and facilities on the municipal side, including substantial roadway construction work, will prove to be a great benefit to the City in years to come.

The plan will be submitted to the Woonsocket City Council for their endorsement for Monday, April 6, and to the School Committee for their upcoming April 8 meeting.

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