For Immediate Release:

Saxe Building Project completed on time and under budget

New Canaan, CT (July 29, 2019). The Board of Education’s unanimous vote to accept the Saxe Building Project as complete at its meeting on July 15, 2019, marked the culmination of a successful building project – coming three years after the June 16, 2016, groundbreaking - that will contribute to the New Canaan Public School’s student experience at the middle school level for years to come.

“We brought this project in on time and under budget and set Saxe up to deliver excellence in education for the next 20-plus years,” said BOE member Penny Rashin, who served as Chair of the Saxe Building Committee. “Seeing the enthusiastic faces of the Saxe students as they perform in the auditorium, as they learn in correctly sized classrooms, and as they walk the now uncluttered hallways has been tremendously rewarding.”

The Saxe Building Project consisted primarily of three major components:

- Building of an addition on the northwest corner of Saxe campus providing net 12 new classrooms to meet needs created by enrollment increases and program changes.
- Renovation of the 60-year-old Saxe auditorium.
- Building new band and choral rooms which allowed all music classrooms to be correctly sized and added key storage for the auditorium and music instruments.

The project addressed the needs of the school due to overcrowding caused by enrollment increases that reached well over 1300 students in a space originally designed for 1050.
“Teachers were teaching students in undersized classrooms and hallways. The music areas were particularly over-crowded. And there were no private spaces for parent-teacher meetings," added Ms. Rashin.

The classroom addition, which is designed to handle current and projected enrollment and flex to 1400 plus students, opened at the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year. The renovated auditorium and new music rooms opened in the fall of 2017.

“To see and hear how our students have responded to our new Visual and Performing Arts instructional spaces is amazing," said Alan Sneath, Director of Visual and Performing Arts. “Our music students’ performances at Saxe have been stellar, from our choir, band and orchestra concerts to our sold-out fifth/sixth and seventh/eighth grade musicals. Our students’ artwork has been displayed throughout our Saxe halls and display cases. In addition, our music technology students now have an appropriate space to compose their original pieces.”

The Project’s estimated final cost of $18,050,000 is more than $500,000 under its original budgeted price of $18.6 million. State reimbursement thus far has been $2,700,000, with an additional $300,000 estimated. The total net cost to the town is about $15,050,000.

“Not only was this building project necessary for an increasing population over the years, but students and staff now benefit from the latest in technology, engineering, and functional instructional furnishings," said Saxe Principal David Gusitsch. “In addition to the academic classrooms, we have a dedicated STEM lab that allows for innovation and opportunities for every student. The Visual and Performing Arts program was bolstered with the upgrades and resized rehearsal spaces. And the new Saxe Auditorium is marvelous in both form and function. We could not be more grateful for all of the visionaries, professionals, and volunteers who made this possible from concept to conclusion. The Saxe community certainly benefits from their dedication to providing the best possible educational experience for our students, and for that, we sincerely thank them.”

Vice Chair of the Building Committee, Jim Beall, echoed these sentiments: “The success of this project depended on many people including our superb project team of JCJ (architect), O & G Industries (construction manager), Gene Torone (owner’s rep), Tighe & Bond (environmentalist), and the dedicated members of the Saxe Building Committee,” he said. “I would also like to thank the members of the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, Town Council and the Board of Education as well as our Town Building and Health Officials and Fire Marshall for their support.”

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