



## November 1, 2018 ● District Newsletter

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### Important Dates (details on school websites)

- 11/5 - School Committee Meeting
- 11/6 - Election Day (no school)
- 11/12 - Veterans Day (no school)
- 11/15 - Elementary Schools: PD Day, HS/MS: Parent/Teacher Conferences (no school)
- 11/19 - School Committee Meeting
- 11/22-23 - Thanksgiving Break

Check school websites for additional events

### Connect with Us

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[www.smithfield-ps.org](http://www.smithfield-ps.org)

<http://judypaolucci.edublogs.org/>



District Twitter feed



Judy Paolucci's Twitter feed

Find us on 

### ***Happy Thanksgiving!***

Thanksgiving is a time to give thanks for family, good health, close friends, clean water and healthful food, and a warm and safe home. In Smithfield schools, we are also thankful for a supportive community, partnerships with parents, engaged students, and safe school environments.



~ Judy Paolucci

### **School Bond - Why Now?**

Any opposition to approving municipal bonds usually include reasons to delay the project but all delays come with costs. For the school bond being put before the Smithfield voters on November 6th, there are tremendous costs for postponement.

The Providence Journal reported on a poll conducted in late September and early October that found 77% of voters in favor of the \$250-million state bond for school repair. Such a bond will provide additional monies and added incentives to districts with approved school construction or renovation projects. Smithfield is one of nine communities at the front of the line for securing these additional funds. While we have not yet been guaranteed a set amount of incentives, preliminary review of our elementary reconfiguration project suggests that we may be eligible for the maximum incentive amount - 20% in addition to our 35% minimum reimbursement. Considering both interest and principal, this amounts to about an additional \$13,000,000 for Smithfield.

If the project is delayed, we will not simply lose these added incentives but will also face increased construction costs due to ever increasing costs of construction. According to a number of

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## **Fire Code Variance**

On Tuesday, October 2nd, Judy Paolucci, Angelo Mencucci, and our Fire Marshall, Captain Michael Dexter, went to the Fire Code Board of Compliance to request a variance for Winsor Elementary School. The board comments included, "The Town of Smithfield has not done a very good job attending to the safety of its children." The board was dismayed that, 14 years after the original variance was awarded, no changes have been made to get the school in compliance. The district has, however, attended to the conditions of the variance, including adding a new exit from the lower level, limiting the number of students occupying that area of the building at any time, and conducting additional fire drills.

A new variance was awarded under the following conditions:

- If the bond passes, we will have until the start of the 2021-2022 school year to vacate Winsor and decommission the building.
- If the bond fails, we will have until the start of the 2019-2020 school year to install a sprinkler system to the portion of the building that is below grade. The cost of this project is estimated to exceed \$300,000 and will not be eligible for state reimbursements.

The fire code issue is one of many deficiencies existing in the Winsor Elementary School facility.

## **School Bond (Continued)**

construction cost indices (for example, Rider Levett Bucknall and Turner Building Cost Index), construction costs have been rising steadily and are typically 4% or higher. Even assuming a more conservative estimate of 3% increases per year, the total cost of the elementary renovations would rise by nearly \$14 million over the course of 10 years. In addition, these facilities would further deteriorate, resulting in added costs. The Jacobs Report, commissioned by the State of Rhode Island, estimates that Smithfield school facilities will have an additional \$13 million in deficiencies over the next 5 years.

Although all elementary facilities are in need of renovations, we have been highlighting Winsor Elementary School since its deficiencies threaten its long term use. If we don't close Winsor, we run the risk of having Winsor closed for us. Currently, Winsor has a fire code variance (see story at left). This is just one of its deficiencies. The infrastructure of Winsor - its electrical, HVAC, and other systems, have aged beyond their useful life and may fail at any time. Since Winsor sits on property that is undersized, it doesn't make sense to invest further in the facility. In addition, it is estimated that to bring Winsor up to ADA and fire code compliance, replace its aging infrastructure and bring the facility to 21st Century utility, it would cost over 90% of its value.

The conditions at Old County Road School and LaPerche, although not as dire, require our immediate attention. Electrical and HVAC systems are failing. Access control to the school, vehicular traffic patterns, and other issues, when addressed by renovations, would improve the overall safety and security of the buildings.

Some have suggested that the bond be defeated and the school department seek a bond for a smaller project. This is not feasible. If we were to seek approval from RIDE for a smaller project, we would need to go through a new stage 2 application, which would lack equity for our elementary facilities - making approval less likely. In addition, the time that it would take would potentially bring us beyond the timeline for the added state incentives. Potentially, it may cost the town more for a smaller project in the future than it will for a comprehensive project at the present time. If we want to be fiscally conservative, we need to act now.



## **College Financial Aid Workshop**

Senator Reed annually hosts a college financial aid workshop for students and families interested in learning more about the college financial aid process.

Participants include:

- RI Student Loan Authority
- College Planning Center of RI
- Student Financial Aid Administrators
- Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner
- RI Society of Certified Public Accountants

LOCATION: CCRI - Warwick  
Bobby Hackett Theatre  
(located in the round building)

TIME: Monday, November 19, 2018  
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

## **Blogging**

The most recent Super Scoop blog posts are titled, "Leveling the Playing Field" and "Partnerships." Blog posts are available at:

[www.judypaolucci.edublogs.org](http://www.judypaolucci.edublogs.org)



## **Halloween Science Show**

Each year, fifth graders from across the district learn a little science as part of Halloween festivities. Science demonstrations have a spooky theme and cover such topics as chemical change, physical properties, phosphorescence and fluorescence, and combustion. Below are some pictures from this year's Halloween Science Show.





### **COPS Safety Grant**

The U. S. Office of Community Oriented Policing Services has approved Smithfield’s request for \$454,063 under the 2018 COPS STOP School Violence: School Violence Prevention Program (SVPP). Our local cash match will be \$151,354 over the next 2 years. This funding provides awards to improve security at schools and on school grounds through evidence-based school safety programs.

The Smithfield application includes a comprehensive school safety audit done by a school safety expert. While the District Emergency Operations Team meets regularly and continually evaluates different aspects of the Emergency Response Plan, a comprehensive look at all aspects of campus safety would help direct this team to continue their work in the most productive manner. The on-site assessment will evaluate:

- exterior access to each building
- interior security procedures
- use of security equipment, communication systems and capabilities including emergency power and communications, detection of intruders, and perimeter security
- internal theft
- management procedures
- construction issues

The audit will also include a review of written plans and procedures, drills conducted, adequacy of training, and a school climate assessment. Findings from the audit will be incorporated into a detailed written report. **(continued)**

### **Outstanding Service Award**

### **(COPS Grant, continued)**

Through funding from the COPS grant, entrances at both Gallagher Middle School and Smithfield High Schools will be redesigned to include a sallyport or double entry door system that requires visitors to flow through the main office. Main exterior doors would also be equipped with access control system entry to better monitor and control who is accessing the building at what time. Offices would also be equipped with panic buttons (duress alarms) to provide office staff with a means of quickly and discreetly alerting the police department during an emergency. Exterior doors at the middle and high schools are especially problematic as after-school athletics programming requires access to and from the outside at a time when office staff are off-duty.



Redesigned entryways are already part of the overall design for renovated elementary schools to be completed over the next 5 years.

### **District Policies**

The School Committee policies are located on the district website at <https://policies.smithfield-ps.org/> and under district info. Most recently, the following policies were approved by the School Committee:

- [Video Surveillance](#) - This policy describes the district’s use of cameras for safety and security.
- [State and Local Assessments](#) - This policy explains the role of assessments and the responsibilities of the district for state and local assessments.

The following policies will be reviewed by the School Committee in November:

- [School District Annual Report](#) - Describes the contents and timeline for the district’s annual report
- [Annual Budget](#) - Denotes the responsibilities of the School Committee and Superintendent regarding the budget
- [Budget Deadlines and Schedules](#) - Provides the timeline for budget development



The RI Blood Center hosted their annual High School Hero Dinner and Awards Ceremony on Thursday, October 25th. Cathy Riley, Smithfield High School's school nurse, was awarded the Outstanding Service by a School Nurse Award at the ceremony.



**CHILD OUTREACH SCREENING**  
***EVERY CHILD \*\*\* EVERY YEAR***

**WHO?** Children who are 3-5 years old and are residents of the town of Smithfield & some non-residence children are eligible to participate. Please call for more information.

**What?** Vision, Hearing, Speech/ Language, Development & Social/ Emotional Skills

**Where?** Smithfield School Administration Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor 49 Farnum Pike, Smithfield

**When?** November 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup>

*For an appointment call 231-6608*

*RI Child Outreach and Smithfield Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, race, religion, national origin, color or disability in accordance with applicable state laws and regulations.*

**Partnerships: Uno Pizzeria**

**FY20 Budget Calendar**

*The draft budget calendar for FY20 is provided below:*

10/22- 11/9	Finance Director and Superintendent Work on Budget Projection for Level Services
11/19	Town Manager and Superintendent meet to discuss Budget Priorities and Projections
11/19	Discussion of School Budget Parameters and Goals at Regularly Scheduled SC Meeting
11/19	Budget rollout to directors and principals and training on iVisions budget process
12/3	At regular meeting of the ATeam: discussion of a staffing plan for FY20
12/20	School budgets due to Director of Finance
1/4 - 11	Individual meetings of Administrators with Superintendent to review, & revise budgets
1/22, 5:30 p.m.	School Budget Workshop held prior to regular School Committee mtg. Focus: Staffing Plan
2/4, 5:30 p.m.	School Budget Workshop held prior to regular meeting - Focus: Non-staffing needs
On or about 2/20	Joint meeting with Town Council and School Committee
2/19, 7:00 p.m.	Preliminary FY20 School Budget Presented at Regular SC Meeting
On or before 3/14	Preliminary Town Budget Provided to Town Council
5/14, 7:00 p.m.	Public Hearing of School Budget and Town Budget
6/14, 7:00 p.m.	Town Considers Approval of Final FY19 Capital and Operating Budgets at Annual Town Meeting

Partnerships provide the “special sauce” that help educators “dish up” innovative educational experiences for students. We hope this spotlight of one of our partnerships move other local businesses to find new ways to engage with our schools. We already have many great partnerships and plan to highlight one each month.



Uno Pizzeria & Grill’s Adopt Our School Program allows them to do the following for Smithfield Schools:

- Deliver and set up food for events, such as Teacher Appreciation Day or PTO/PTA events (call in advance)
- Dough Rai\$er fundraising program
- Teacher discount cards and Teacher of the Month certificates
- Staff appetizer parties providing free appetizers for staff or PTO meetings (call in advance)
- Student certificates

Contact Katie Szumita, marketing coordinator ([kszumita@unos.com](mailto:kszumita@unos.com) or 678-0852) for other ideas. The Smithfield restaurant’s phone number is 233-4570.

### **GMS Argonauts Visit the Amazon**

Jane Ramos, GMS science teacher, and Abigail Marsella, GMS 8th grader, just returned from an exciting visit to Peru as members of a research expedition. The pair participated in a JASON Learning science experience as part of Smithfield’s ongoing relationship with the nonprofit science organization. Teachers at Gallagher have been using JASON Learning curriculum for many years and recently, the district partnered with JASON Learning on additional projects, including opportunities for science research experiences for students and teachers.

In addition to providing the pair from Smithfield an opportunity to engage in real science, students at home learned from their experience and engaged in the excitement the trip afforded. The pair of “Argonauts,” trapped and studied bees while in the rainforests of Peru.



***Abigail Marsella joined other student Argonauts studying bees in the Amazon rainforest of Peru.***



### **State Assessment Results: PSAT and SAT for 10th & 11th Graders**

The Rhode Island Department of Education has released the results from the April 2018 administration of the PSATs and SATs. This is the first year that the PSATs and SATs were administered to 10th and 11th graders respectively as a part of the state's accountability system. Rhode Island's public assessment results can be found at [this link](#) on the Department of Education website. The results for Smithfield is found in the table at left.

The state has been attempting to increase the number of students taking the PSATs and SATs by removing barriers to participation. In 2017, RI funded the administration of PSATs and SATs for the first time. When the assessments became a part of the state accountability system in 2018, there was a 26% increase in participation for PSATs and a 17% increase in participation for SATs. Due to the change in participation rates, the data from April 2018 will serve as our baseline for future comparisons..

The College Board sent students a report of their performance on the assessment. Later this month, students will receive a state assessment report from the school that includes the student's achievement levels in math and English Language Arts. An annotated report with

Teachers and administrators are analyzing the performance data in order to identify areas of improvement. To ensure alignment, we are comparing the expectations of the assessments with the expectations in our curriculum. This is one example of our commitment to our promise: Every student will be prepared for continued learning, career, and life.

	<b>Percent Tested</b>	<b>Percent Meeting and Exceeding Expectations</b>	<b>State Rank</b>
<b>PSAT ELA (Gr. 10)</b>	94%	70%	13th
<b>PSAT Math (Gr. 10)</b>	94%	54%	7th
<b>SAT ELA (Gr. 11)</b>	97%	70%	8th
<b>SAT Math (Gr. 11)</b>	97%	35%	19th

### **US Office Of Naval Research Grant Award for High School Chemistry**

Smithfield High School chemistry teachers David Thibodeau and Jack Hurley are participating in the East Bay Collaborative's first cohort training for chemistry instruction. These two days of instruction will orient teachers to the STEM Natural Approach to Chemistry (NAC) NGSS program.

Teachers will receive over \$20,000 of Chemistry equipment, texts, and instructional resources, in addition to training. Specifically, our high school will receive 125 annual student licenses for five years for NAC Chemistry & Engineering e-Learning Portal texts, lab manuals, interactive simulations, and manipulative virtual lab investigations. Science classrooms will be equipped with "hands-on" lab stations, including a portable Lab-Master with spectrometer, temperature and other probes; and small scale heaters for data collection from thermal experiments. Classrooms will also receive a set of 35 hard bound texts and lab-manuals, molecular models, and a chemical package for each of the six lab stations.

explanations for parents can be found [here](#).

### **Spotlight: LaPerche Elementary School**

At Right: Fifth grade students learned to trust their classmates as they worked as a team to build communications, teamwork, decision making, and problem solving skills at Project Cope.

Below: Independent Art Teacher, Sue Greco spent 2 days at LaPerche, providing students an opportunity to engage in watercolor painting.



At Right: Durham bus drivers helped students practice bus evacuation. Fifth grade students took on leadership roles by assisting each student out the back of the bus safely.





At Left: Students spent time with the firefighters learning how to work the fire fighting equipment and learning the importance of practicing fire safety.