

The Day

New London Magnet High School reopens after \$110 million renovation



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New London — The New London High School Jazz Band kicked off the opening of the high school's \$110 million extension and renovation of its Multi-Magnet Campus on Friday afternoon.

Several New London city officials attended the opening in the cafeteria.

The reconstruction marks roughly 10 years since the original planning and development began. The additions include expansive offerings, including an auditorium with professional equipment, a commercial kitchen for students studying culinary arts, and collaboration spaces for students and teachers.

One of the new additions includes an enclosed connector, or nicknamed by students as the "tunnel," which previously separated the Magnet School from the New London High School.

"To be able to get to and from this building and that connector represents that this school is no longer two different schools, it's one big campus. And I feel like we are one big family," said Sian Crespo, 17, a senior student leader.

In her speech, Crespo thanked the city for constructing a "state-of-the-art, well-built kitchen" which will help her ambitions of entering the culinary arts after graduation.

The school's completion didn't come without challenges.

Initially, some residents opposed the renovation, citing high financial costs. Project executive Diana McNeil cited a list of setbacks and challenges, ranging from the COVID-19 pandemic to design challenges. Eighty percent of the project is being funded by the state.

"10 years ago, a day like today seemed too far in the future," said McNeil. "But here we are celebrating this monumental accomplishment for the city of New London, for New London public schools, but primarily for the children and the families of this community."

In attendance were city officials, including state Rep. Anthony Nolan, D-New London, Mayor Michael Passero and Superintendent Cynthia Ritchie. Project engineers, alongside students and faculty, filled the room as well.

The magnet program provides students with specialized educations in science, technology, engineering, and math, as well as arts and vocational programs.

The school uses a myriad of community partners in the public and private sectors to foster and support students' ambitions after high school. Electric Boat and the New London Fire Department are some organizations providing resources and training to students.

"There's so much going on. Every day of the week. Our sports program is dynamic. There's hundreds of clubs after school. So the sky's the limit. Kids just have to dream big and come forward with ideas and then we collaborate. We do everything that's possible to meet their needs," Ritchie said.

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