

## **Speaking of Education**

*By James C. Agostine, Superintendent Regional School District #16*

### **Region 16 Building Project Update**

On November 16, 2011, The Region 16 Board of Education voted to hold a referendum on December 20, 2011, for the proposed building project. The project has three components: 1) the replacement of Community and Algonquin Schools with a new PreK-5 school on 75 New Haven Rd. 2) additions and renovations to Laurel Ledge School, and 3) the conversion of one wing of Algonquin School to a new District Office space. The projects will be combined into one question. **“Shall Regional School District Number 16 appropriate \$47,536,000.00 for the 2011 Elementary Schools and Administrative Facilities improvements program, and authorize the issue of Bonds and Notes to finance the portion of the appropriation not defrayed by Grants?”**

Algonquin School has long been known as a deficient educational space. Discussions and referenda dating back almost two decades illustrate the recognized deficiencies. The costs associated with upkeep and maintenance of operating two elementary schools in Prospect also point to a single PreK-5 facility, which will be more energy efficient, resulting in a significant savings to Region 16 vs. operating the two current schools.

Laurel Ledge additions and renovations include two enclosed corridors that connect all of the buildings on the site for health and safety purposes. Students must travel from building to building in inclement weather several times per day to go to specials and the cafeteria. Security reasons alone beg the solution of connected buildings. The educational program suffers in cold and inclement weather as young students must use time to dress for movement from one building to another.

The Region 16 District Office is a rented space. The idea of converting space in Algonquin School is a measure to use money currently being spent on rent to own a much more workable office space.

Despite what you may hear about the costs associated with the project, Region 16 is very fortunate in being eligible for state reimbursement up to 68% of the cost of the project. The current bonding rates also point to an opportune time to finally solve the facilities issue in Region 16. Please view our website, [www.region16ct.org](http://www.region16ct.org) for details on the project. Conceptual designs and cost estimates may be examined on the Power Point slide presentation. Please feel free to call District Office at 203-758-6671 if you have any questions or would like to arrange a presentation to an audience.