

Bridgeport launches superintendent search

Process begins after nearly two years without permanent leader

By Jessica Simms
STAFF WRITER

BRIDGEPORT — The long-awaited Bridgeport superintendent search is officially beginning, and the goal is to have a permanent leader in place by

July 1. Bridgeport Public Schools have been without a permanent superintendent since the fall of 2024, but through state intervention, the Department of Education said the school board needed

to revise its governing policies and bylaws before it could begin a search. Now that this has been completed, the district has posted an announcement on its website that there is an opening for the

superintendent of schools. The application process for candidates will begin mid-September and all applications must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on Oct. 18. Connecticut’s intervention **Search continues on A8**



Hearst Connecticut Media file photo
Students and parents arrive for the first day of school at Cesar A. Batalla School in Bridgeport in 2024. Bridgeport Public Schools is aiming to appoint its next superintendent by Dec. 1.

Leaders scrutinize sham marriages

Indictments alleging at least 100 in state have lawmakers working on how to stop them

By Joshua Eaton
and Brianna Gurciullo
STAFF WRITERS

As a group of people in New York face federal charges and stand accused of arranging sham marriages between foreign nationals and U.S. citizens across the country, including in Connecticut, Gov. Ned Lamont’s office said a law passed by the state legislature this year aims to throw a wrench in such schemes. But the legislature’s work may not be done, according to both Democratic and Republican leaders. **Marriages continues on A8**

MILFORD

Flooring company files lawsuit against town

Claims officials split firehouse flooring job to avoid public bidding

By Brian Gioiele
STAFF WRITER

MILFORD — A Milford flooring company owner claims city officials violated state and local law in how they handled a flooring job at the fire department. Buddy Prete, owner of Ultimate Interiors, filed suit in late July against the city. The suit states officials violated Connecticut General Statutes and the city’s purchasing rules by splitting a single project into separate orders to avoid public bid. **Lawsuit continues on A4**



Jordan Grice/Hearst Connecticut Media
The City Trust apartment building at 955 Main St. in downtown Bridgeport.

Landmark Bridgeport City Trust building sells for \$21.5M

By Brian Lockhart
STAFF WRITER

BRIDGEPORT — The landmark 1920s-era art deco City Trust building and block has a new owner. Over seven years after New York City-based Time Equities Inc. purchased the apartment and commercial complex, among downtown’s taller structures, the real estate investment company has sold the property to an entity associated with Abraham Gottesman. The site went on the market in late 2024.

Gottesman is behind the new Soundview “luxury” residential building, a renovated former office tower at 855 Main St. “We’re going to just continue doing improvements where they (Time Equities) left off,” he said Monday, emphasizing he is not looking to push out existing tenants. “We want to make sure they feel comfortable,” Gottesman continued. “We’re not coming in to ‘re-tenant.’ Absolutely not.” The announced sale price was \$21.5 million. Mu-

nicipal land records show Time Equities had paid \$13.5 million in early 2019. The City Trust block is surrounded by John, Main, Bank and Broad streets, and situated across from both McLevy Green and the government center that houses the mayor’s office and other key municipal departments. The complex includes 117 apartments, a recently upgraded 240-space above-ground parking garage, noteworthy nightlife tenants like the Grill 2 and Brick & Barrel restaurants and Bank

Sports Bar, plus a hairstylist and Avis car rental. The space that housed the former City Trust bank, which was arguably the anchor of the block’s ground floor, has long been vacant. The property was initially redeveloped in the early 2000s and viewed at the time as a harbinger of more residential conversions and downtown growth. Max Pastor, Time Equities’ chief operating officer, in a statement Monday said that entity “added significant value to the asset by **Building continues on A4**

State near the top on childhood vaccines as U.S. rates plummet

By Cris Villalonga-Vivoni
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As national immunization rates trend downward, Connecticut, instead, continues to see increases in the number of schoolchildren receiving their annual shots, according to new federal and state data. Around 98.6% of Connecticut kindergartners received the required measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine in the 2025-26 school year, a 0.4% increase from the previous year, according to the state Department of Health.

Connecticut has the second highest MMR vaccination rate among kindergartners in the country, according to the Centers for Disease Control. “We’ve reached an all-time high,” said state Department of Public Health commissioner Manisha Juthani during a press briefing on Tuesday, regarding MMR vaccines. For the United States as a whole, the opposite happened, according to new data from the CDC. National MMR immunization rates among kindergartners dropped to 92.4%, marking the fourth year of record-breaking lows. Herd immunity is 95%.

Vaccination coverage among U.S. kindergartners also decreased for all reported vaccines from the previous year. The CDC said coverage for MMR, DTaP, polio and VAR dropped in more than half of the states. State experts attribute Connecticut’s higher immunization rates to strict state requirements, health department initiatives, evidence-based recommendations and community outreach. And yet, pediatricians and public experts say families continue to raise questions around vaccine safety, reflecting a hesitancy they say is in part fueled by rhetoric from the federal

government. “I don’t think any parent wants their child to catch a vaccine-preventable illness,” said Dr. Andrew Carlson, division head of primary care at Connecticut Children’s Medical Center. “I think there’s just concern about what they think is doing the right thing for their child, and making sure that that’s an informed decision is part of our job as a pediatrician.” **National vs. state exemptions** All children attending public and private schools in Connecticut, as well as preschools and childcare **Vaccines continues on A4**

