



NJDOE News

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Design Work to Proceed on \$181 Million in School Repairs and Renovations

Commissioner of Education David C. Hespe has given the green light for more than 200 health and safety related improvements in schools throughout 17 of the state's special needs districts to enter the construction pipeline.

"These tasks have been identified as priorities by the Abbott districts," noted Hespe. "We are moving them into the design stage, the first phase of the construction process. Completing design work now will clear the way for actual construction to begin once the Legislature approves Governor Whitman's school construction and renovation initiative."

Hespe said there is sufficient money in the current state budget specifically earmarked for design work only.

The repairs and improvements approved by the Department of Education in the Abbott districts carry an estimated \$181 million price tag. Now that design work has been approved, a joint Department of Education/Treasury Department field team will examine the scope of work for each of the priority tasks identified by the districts.

"These improvements are essential to ensure our children have a healthy and safe learning environment," Hespe said.

When Commissioner Hespe announced the department's intention to move forward with design work in September, he said the highest priority would be given to work necessary to protect the health and safety of students. He said approval would be granted only if the improvements were made to existing buildings that would remain in use. The Abbott districts participating in this program agreed that these repairs and renovations should be moved outside of their five-year facilities plan.

Most of the improvements involve fire alarms, electrical systems, emergency signs, sprinkler and standpipe systems, window replacement, security systems, roofing and repairs to the exterior of school buildings. Some work would be done district wide while other tasks would be school specific.

Districts that will benefit from the commissioner's action are Bridgeton, Burlington, Camden, Hoboken, Garfield, Irvington, Keansburg, Long Branch, Millville, New Brunswick, Orange, Passaic, Paterson, Phillipsburg, Union City, Vineland and West New York.

Hespe said additional health and safety related improvements as well as a number of projects designed to serve preschool students should be ready for approval and entry into the construction pipeline in the coming weeks.

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