



NJDOE News

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Approvals Granted for School Construction Plans

Comprehensive plans to renovate and rebuild schools in five Abbott school districts were approved today by Commissioner of Education David C. Hespe, paving the way for the projects to receive full funding under Governor Christie Whitman's school construction and improvement initiatives.

"With the approval of these school construction plans we are well on our way toward meeting our goal of providing every child, regardless of where they go to school, with a safe and productive learning environment," Governor Christie Whitman said. "The \$6 billion commitment we have made to improve school facilities in Abbott school districts will have a profound, positive impact on children for generations to come."

To date, the Commissioner has approved construction plans for seven school districts totaling more than \$695 million. The seven plans, combined with health and safety school improvements already approved, represent over a billion dollar investment in building safer schools in urban areas.

The following school district facilities plans have been approved:

- **Trenton:** Construction of seven new schools and renovations to 14 other schools. Estimated cost: \$315 million
- **Keansburg:** Construction of a new elementary school, reconstruction of another elementary school, alterations to a middle school, additions to the high school and a new building to house an alternative high school. Estimated cost: \$60 million.
- **Bridgeton:** Additions to five elementary schools, the middle school and high school. Estimated cost: \$52 million.
- **Harrison:** Renovations and additions to one elementary school and the high school and construction of a new middle school. Estimated cost: \$30 million.
- **Long Branch:** Replacement of two elementary schools; additions to four other elementary schools, the middle school and high school; and improvements to the alternative high school. Estimated cost: \$128 million.
- **Burlington City:** Additions and alterations to three elementary schools and the high school. Replacement of a middle school. Estimated cost: \$55 million
- **Hoboken:** Renovations to a high school, four elementary schools and a middle school. Estimated cost \$55 million.

Hespe said, "The approval of these plans lays the foundation for an ambitious and long overdue school construction program that will enhance the learning environment for tens of thousands of students. From turning an old abandoned warehouse in Trenton to a new elementary school to replacing antiquated elementary schools in Keansburg and Long Branch, students and parents can look forward to an exciting new and productive school environment. The accelerated approval process is a further demonstration of our commitment to provide quality education in quality schools for all public school children."

Hespe said he expects to approve facilities plans for almost all of the 30 Abbott districts by the end of January.

The improvements authorized by the Department of Education, pursuant to the Educational Facilities Construction and Financing Act signed into law on July 18th, will be managed and financed by the state Economic Development Authority. The determination of preliminary eligible costs, final eligible costs and the amount of state assistance will be determined as part of the approval process for specific school facility projects.

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