



NJDOE News

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Paterson & Newark School Construction Plans Approved - Four Other Abbott Districts Receive Approvals -

Education Commissioner David Hespe today approved long-term facilities plans for Paterson, Newark and four other Abbott school districts that call for investing more than \$2.7 billion in rebuilding and renovating schools.

The approvals granted to Newark, Paterson, Millville, Orange, Phillipsburg and Neptune pave the way for the school districts to receive full state support for their comprehensive school construction improvements.

Newark, the largest school district in the state with a projected enrollment in five years of 43,000 students, received approval for an estimated \$1.6 billion in school building improvements including:

- Eight new elementary schools on new sites;
- Twelve new elementary schools on existing or expanded sites;
- Alterations or additions to six elementary schools;
- Three new elementary/middle schools on new sites;
- Twelve new elementary/middle schools on existing or expanded sites;
- Alterations or additions to eight elementary/middle schools;
- Four new middle schools on new sites;
- One new middle school on an existing site;
- Alterations or additions to four middle schools;
- Alterations and additions to two special education schools;
- Three new high schools on three new sites; and
- Renovations or additions to nine high schools.

Newark currently has 80 schools including 23 elementary schools, 38 elementary/middle schools, four middle schools, two special education schools, 11 high schools, one leased high school and one vacant school. The long-range facilities plan calls for 72 schools including 26 elementary schools, 23 elementary/middle schools, nine middle schools, two special education schools and 12 high schools.

Paterson, with a projected enrollment in five years of 26,000 students, received approval to move forward with an estimated \$734 million in school construction projects including:

- Ten new kindergarten through grade eight schools;
- Two new pre-kindergarten schools;
- Renovations at 15 elementary schools and one new high school; and
- Renovations to 21 school buildings.
- Conversion of one elementary school into a high school

Paterson currently has 32 elementary schools, four high schools and seven academies operating in leased space.

In the six months since the Educational Facilities and Construction Financing Act was signed into law, the Department of Education has approved over \$5.2 billion in critically needed school construction projects involving more than 200 school districts across New Jersey.

"The plans approved today will make a dramatic improvement in the quality of education provided to children in some of our largest cities," Commissioner Hespe said. "The far-reaching construction plans will lay the foundation for tens of thousands of children to move out of antiquated and overcrowded schools and into new, modern facilities."

The Commissioner also approved the following long-range facilities plans:

- **Phillipsburg:** Closing two elementary schools; construction of one new pre-kindergarten/kindergarten facility; conversion of a high school into an elementary school; alterations or additions to two elementary schools and a middle school; and construction of a new high school. Estimated cost: \$111 million. Projected

enrollment in five years: 3943 students.

- **Millville:** Conversion of three schools serving children from preschool to seventh grade into schools serving children preschool to fifth grade; additions to one middle school, conversion of the upper middle school into a high school and additions to high school. Estimated cost: \$79 million. Projected enrollment in five years: 5802 students.
- **Neptune:** Renovations or additions to four elementary schools, the middle school and high school; construction of a new elementary school; and purchase of a building to serve as an early childhood center. Estimated cost: \$80 million. Projected enrollment in five years: 5116 students.
- **Orange:** Additions or alterations to seven elementary schools; construction of a new elementary school; conversion of a middle school into an elementary school; additions or alterations to the high school; and conversion of a former police station into an alternative high school. Estimated cost: \$95 million. Projected enrollment in five years: 4732 students.

"The school construction program continues to move forward on several fronts," Hespe said. "Not only are we keeping our commitment to urban schools, we are providing financial support to suburban and rural districts for school improvement projects that are already being built or ready to go to construction."

In addition to the approvals announced today, the Department of Education has approved \$657 million in state funds to help finance more than 414 school construction projects in 172 school districts that have already been completed or under construction now. The total cost of these projects is estimated at \$1.9 billion. Under the Educational Facilities Construction and Financing Act, these projects are eligible for state funding covering at least 40 percent of eligible project costs.

In addition, Department of Education has given its approval to invest \$260 million in state funds to help finance 71 school improvement projects that are ready to proceed to construction. These projects, which total \$643 million and involve 71 school districts, have already won the approval of local voters in school construction referenda. Under the law, the state will pay for at least 40 percent of the eligible project costs.

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