



NJDOE News

For More Information Contact the Public Information Office:

**Tom Rosenthal
Rich Vespucci
609-292-1126**

For Release: June 25, 2002

Department of Education Grants Preliminary Approval for Elementary School Construction Project in Warren Township

The Department of Education today announced preliminary approval of a project to build an addition and make alterations to instructional space in the Angelo L. Tomaso Elementary School, Warren Township, Somerset County.

The school district had submitted an application that calls for construction of four new regular classrooms, four small group instruction rooms and two kindergarten classrooms. In addition, the district proposes rehabilitating administrative offices for the guidance counselor and for world languages. The project carries a total estimated cost of \$2.81 million.

In granting preliminary approval to the project, the Department of Education has determined that the plans are consistent with education laws and regulations governing school facilities. The Department of Education has advised local school officials of several administrative steps they must follow to complete the application process. The district must:

- Confirm in writing that it has elected to construct the projects as described in the application
- Choose whether it wishes to be reimbursed for some of the project cost by the state through a state grant or through state aid (debt service aid)
- Decide not to appeal the state's determination of the preliminary eligible project costs.

After receiving the district's response, the Department of Education will notify the district of the final costs eligible for state funding. The Department of Education has determined the preliminary cost eligible for funding for the Warren Township project to be \$1.68 million. The state's share of this project would equal \$670,894, or 40 percent, of this amount.

If the district elects to have the state Economic Development Authority construct the project, state support will be in the form of a grant.

State regulations require that before construction can begin, all school facilities projects have local support. For most districts, such support comes from an approved voter referendum.

The Warren Township Board of Education is funding this building program without the need to conduct a referendum or sell bonds. A recent \$9.8 million bond issue for two major additions afforded the board the opportunity to invest the funds until needed. This resulted in interest earnings over \$350,000.

For the past three years, the board has included \$400,000 in each budget for the Building Reserve Fund. These funds, and the money to be received from the state as a result of the Educational Facilities Construction and Financing Act, will allow the project to be completed without the need to pay interest costs or to raise taxes for this project.

State funding of this project comes from an \$8.6 billion appropriated under the landmark Educational Facilities Construction and Financing Act. The law was enacted to make unprecedented amounts of state funds available to help meet a critical need for new, safe and updated schools throughout New Jersey.

www.state.nj.us/education