



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
SCHOOLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

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SDA, East Orange Educators Celebrate Opening of Benjamin Banneker Academy

EAST ORANGE – New Jersey Schools Development Authority (SDA) and East Orange School District officials held a ribbon-cutting ceremony today to formally open the Benjamin Banneker Academy. Students, parents, area officials and community leaders were on hand for the ceremony at the new school, which opened its doors to students September 7. It marks the seventh project completed in East Orange in as many years through New Jersey's school construction program.

Banneker Principal Sharon Vincent said: "The students and staff members of Benjamin Banneker Academy are very excited about the opening of our new school. We are bringing the same energy and commitment to excellence and high student achievement that we had at Fourth Avenue School. To be surrounded by the latest technology being used in the classroom, such as the SMART Boards, provides us with the opportunity to expose our students to the latest in innovative and dynamic presentations as well as stimulating interactive learning environments. Benjamin Banneker Academy students and staff will demonstrate how they embrace and utilize the new learning environment by continuing to meet and/or surpass our Adequate Yearly Progress goals every year."

The new school was designed and constructed to provide 21st century educational opportunities for 567 students in prekindergarten through 5th grade. The 83,561-square-foot Benjamin Banneker Academy includes 28 general classrooms, a media center, a cafeteria, an auditorium and a gymnasium. It also has many specialized classroom spaces, including rooms for science; writing and speaking; foreign language; computers; art and music. It has space dedicated to teaching hospitality management as well.

The district named the school in honor of Benjamin Banneker, the influential African- American mathematician and astronomer whose planetary and celestial calculations appeared in widely circulated scientific almanacs in the 18th and early 19th centuries.

The project was designed by Urbahn Associates, Inc. and built by D&K Construction Co. Imperial Construction Group, Inc. managed the project for the SDA.

Other completed SDA projects in East Orange include the new Cicely Tyson School of Fine and Performing Arts, which opened last year; the new Langston Hughes Elementary School; additions and renovations to Mildred B. Garvin MicroSociety School and East Orange High School; and the rehabilitation and modernization of East Orange Campus 9 (formerly Clifford J. Scott High School) and the Wahlstrom Early Childhood Center.

Since its inception, the school construction program has completed 623 projects in SDA Districts. In addition to 55 new schools, it has provided funding for 46 extensive additions, renovations and/or rehabilitations; six demonstration projects and more than 500 other projects. Also, it has completed 25 projects in Regular Operating Districts: seven new schools and 18 extensive additions, renovations and/or rehabilitations.