
[Home](#) [Newsroom](#) [Media](#) [Administration](#) [NJ's Priorities](#) [Contact Us](#)

[Press Releases](#) [Public Addresses](#) [Executive Orders](#) [Press Kit](#) [Reports](#)

[Home](#) > [Newsroom](#) > [Press Releases](#) > [2012](#) > [Governor Christie Continues Implementation of Critical Reforms and Responsible Management of School Construction Spending with 2012 SDA Capital Projects](#)

Governor Christie Continues Implementation of Critical Reforms and Responsible Management of School Construction Spending with 2012 SDA Capital Projects

Wednesday, February 15, 2012 Tags: [Education](#)

Twenty School Projects Cost-Effectively Address Priority Educational Needs and Deficiencies for Children

Trenton, NJ – Governor Chris Christie today announced the recommendation of twenty new capital school construction projects in eighteen of New Jersey's municipalities that will meet the needs of students in some of the state's neediest districts. The announcement of this year's projects, made at the site of the West New York Memorial High School, continue the comprehensive reform measures implemented by Governor Christie and the Schools Development Authority (SDA) last February to bring responsible and sound financial management to New Jersey's long-troubled school construction programs that had come to represent some of the worst waste and mismanagement known to state government. These measures further the Administration's top to bottom assessment and implementation of much needed reforms since taking office and naming Marc Larkins CEO of the Authority in 2010.

These changes reflect a commitment to the efficient and proper use of public funds, an objective prioritization of statewide educational needs and the advancement of sound design and construction principles to bring increased accountability to the process and eliminate wasteful spending.

"For years, the SDA was allowed to operate without any accountability or supervision, resulting in a disastrous legacy that featured wasteful spending and cost overruns, a bloated bureaucracy and empty promises on the number of schools to be built and completed," said Governor Christie. "Exactly one year ago today, I promised we would not let history repeat itself, implementing meaningful reforms and key changes that have given the SDA the means to construct school facilities projects in efficient and cost effective ways for the first time in twelve years. This 2012 Project Portfolio demonstrates the reforms and improvements instituted at the SDA are reining in the profligate spending of the past while ensuring that students attend modern and efficient schools for the future."

The 2012 Project Portfolio represents the Christie Administration's ongoing commitment to responsibly advance SDA projects in the most efficient manner, in a shift away from design excess, costly change orders and mismanagement. This year's class of projects was evaluated using the same factors established in 2011, including project standardization, total project completion costs, cost per student, and the project's interrelationship with the district's overall plan. The SDA also examined projects that could impact the greatest number of students.

"The 2012 Project Portfolio recognizes those school facilities projects that suffer the most from facility deficiencies. Not every facility need in the state can be addressed with the limited funds at our disposal. Over the past year, the SDA has established a cost effective approach to constructing SDA school facilities projects. In doing so, we are able to provide more facilities for more students utilizing our limited resources," said CEO Marc Larkins. "In addition to the 2012 Portfolio, SDA is committed to advancing and completing the 2011 projects in a timely manner. All 10 projects on the 2011 Plan are scheduled to advance as was planned – 2 have already entered into construction procurement, 7 will advance into construction procurement and predevelopment activities in 2012 and the final project is being addressed through alternative delivery."

The 20 projects set to advance in 2012 were divided into three categories addressing: 1) high educational priority needs 2) high educational priority needs that require further discussions with the District and 3) serious facility deficiencies.

The 2012 Project Portfolio

Projects addressing high educational priority needs, representing a state investment of almost \$675 million:

- Gloucester City – Gloucester City Middle School
- Keansburg – Caruso Elementary School
- New Brunswick – Paul Robeson Community Elementary School
- Newark – Elliot Street Elementary School
- Newark – South Street Elementary School

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Passaic – Dayton Avenue Elementary School Campus

Phillipsburg – Phillipsburg High School

West New York – Memorial High School

Projects addressing high educational priority needs that require further discussions with the District:

Elizabeth – Elementary School grade level

Garfield – Elementary School grade level

Harrison – Middle School grade level

Millville – High School grade level

Paterson – Elementary School grade level

Perth Amboy – All grade levels

Union City – Elementary School grade level

Projects that address serious facility deficiencies:

Camden - Camden High School

Hoboken – Thomas G. Connors Elementary School

Orange – Cleveland Elementary School

Orange – Orange High School

Trenton – Trenton Central High School

Since 2010, the Christie Administration's reforms have recovered over \$10 million with the creation of an aggressive cost recovery team; found cost savings and cost avoidance at the SDA of over \$30 million in excesses, including staff reductions; elimination of consulting contracts and aggressive litigation and legal settlements; and implementation of strategic standardization of school designs that will save nearly \$4 million per project in the future. Additionally, standardization on SDA projects is being implemented in three phases. Phase I culminated in November with the release of the Materials and Systems Manual and Construction Details Manual. Phase II, Kits of Parts, has been released and introduces more consistency, faster delivery and expedited design reviews and code inspections. Phase III entails the completion of a new 21st Century Design Manual slated for later this year.

The Administration has also advanced construction on 23 emergent projects and delegated another 81 grants for districts to complete emergent projects on their own. Another 27 SDA managed emergent projects were completed totaling over \$22.6 million and 13 emergent project grants delegated to district totaling over \$5.7 million were completed. Governor Christie also advanced grants to all other school districts in the state executing 721 grants with a state share of \$213 million and leveraging a local share of \$271 million.

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