

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Authority

FROM: Larry Hanover, Senior Public Information Manager

DATE: April 29, 2008

SUBJECT: New Jersey Schools Development Authority (SDA)  
April Progress Report

### **Introduction:**

A number of SDA staff members gathered April 23 to share the outcome of what CEO Scott Weiner noted "is unquestionably among the most important and exciting work at the SDA of the past few years." Five working groups that had been formed to consider initiatives identified by the Executive Team for implementation during 2008 made their presentations at an afternoon session at Thomas Edison State College.

Those initiatives are: **Investing in our Employees, Promoting Environmental Equity, Enhancing Relationships with other Agencies, Promoting Sustainability at the SDA, and Institutionalizing Site Visits.** The working groups, made up of SDA employees who volunteered input for the various initiatives, presented their initial reports and recommendations to the Executive Team and their colleagues who comprised each group.

"The initiatives, findings, recommendations and overall work product are nothing short of superb," Weiner said. "As implemented, they will make the SDA a more effective and enjoyable workplace and vastly improve our ability to meet our professional responsibilities." On behalf of everyone at the SDA, Weiner expressed appreciation to those who contributed to the working groups.

Representatives of each of the five groups will be meeting with the Executive team to finalize the recommendations and implementation plans, which will begin rolling out in May. Interested SDA employees may still join a group by contacting chairpersons listed below:

**Investing in Our Employees:** Chairs: Wanda Edghill, Amanda Koon-Valentine, E. Tracie Long, Susan Pacuta, Joanne Walsh

**Promoting Environmental Equity:** Chairs: Thomas Schrum, Ron Carper, Dan Millen, Lewis Mok

**Enhancing Relationships with other Agencies:** Chairs: Jacqueline Jennings, Dan Millen, Carol Petrosino, Thomas Schrum, Karon Simmonds

**Promoting Sustainability:** Chairs: Regina Bleck, Jim Poole, John Rivera, Andrew Yosha

**Institutionalizing Site Visits:** Chairs: Jay Moneta, Donna O’Gorman, Joe Van Story

**Other SDA News:**

The City of Plainfield videotaped a full-scale training exercise April 7 by the Plainfield Fire Department at a vacant house owned by the SDA. It is among seven vacant houses owned by the SDA that are slated for demolition this summer to make way for a much-needed playground and expanded parking area at the adjacent Clinton Elementary School. Under an SDA licensing agreement, the department can use the houses for fire training until the demolition project gets under way. The licensing agreement requires department insurance to cover the SDA from any liability.

Under the agreement, the department can conduct “non-destructive exercises,” meaning firefighters can use the houses for training but cannot break anything and are responsible if they cause damage. While the firefighters cannot actually set a house afire and battle a blaze, they do use a smoke machine to simulate fire conditions and have firefighters conduct search-and-rescue training. During the taping, Plainfield Fire Chief Cecil Allen, Mayor Sharon Robinson-Briggs, Public Safety Director Martin Hellwig and other officials thanked the SDA for the unique training opportunity, noting the different floor plans and multi-story buildings are helpful in providing a variety of realistic settings for the trainees. In his remarks, SDA Real Estate acquisition officer Ray Klepar cited the collaboration of the district, fire and city officials with the SDA in providing an important public safety initiative for the benefit of the community. The drill was taped to air on the city’s local access cable network.

**SDA Events (as of April 29, 2008):**

- April 5: Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony, **Slaybaugh Elementary School** and **Davenport Elementary School**, Egg Harbor Township. The Davenport and Slaybaugh schools are providing quality resources to serve the educational needs of 1,000 students from pre-kindergarten through first grade and help meet the demands of increasing enrollment in this growing Atlantic County community. Both new primary schools, which opened in September 2007, were built on district-owned land next to an existing elementary school, creating an educational campus.

- March 27: Topping-Off Ceremony, **West New York PS #3**, West New York. The existing PS No. 3 houses students in pre-kindergarten through 8th grades. The school will be replaced with a new 110,120-square-foot facility, housing 705 students in pre-kindergarten through 6th grade. The new school is expected to open in January 2009.

#### **Upcoming Events:**

- May 10: Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony, **Harrison High School**, Harrison.

#### **Construction Update:**

The SDA currently has **26** projects under construction. Overall, the SDA has completed **41** schools and **37** major renovations and additions, along with nearly 400 health, safety and other projects in SDA (formerly Abbott) Districts. The program also has distributed \$2.2 billion in grants, impacting more than 1,400 suburban schools statewide.

#### **Contractor Procurement:**

Construction bids were advertised in April for school projects in Greater Egg Harbor, East Orange, Neptune and Newark. (Exhibit A)

#### **Construction Contracts:**

As of March 31, 2008, the authority has entered into construction contracts totaling \$3,347,690,079 since the inception of the school construction program in 2002.

  
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Larry Hanover

