



## NEWS RELEASE

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### August 1, 2006 - UPDATE ON MLK/ JEFFERSON PROJECT

**Trenton, NJ** – At a joint press conference held at the Martin Luther King, Jr./Thomas Jefferson Elementary School construction site in Trenton, representatives from the Trenton Board of Education (TBOE), the New Jersey Schools Construction Corporation (SCC) and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) reaffirmed their commitment to the settlement agreement reached in response to the TBOE lawsuit initiated on October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2005 concerning the remediation of the contaminated MLK/Jefferson construction site. The settlement agreement was filed in New Jersey’s Superior Court on July 26, 2006. Superior Court Judge Neil Shuster will provide oversight for all compliance of the agreed upon actions and timelines.

“The reaching of this agreement means that we can anticipate the end of a long drawn out process that has not only displaced and disrupted the education and lives of our children, but has wreaked havoc on the lives of Trenton Public School staff and the North Ward community.

We are delighted to be able to see a light at the end of the tunnel,” stated Trenton Board President, Robert Revelle. The agreement states that the Trenton Board of Education and the SCC mutually agree to a common objective of completing construction of the New Jefferson School for occupancy by September 2009.

“The SCC remains committed to fully remediating this school site in conforming with the DEP directive,” said Scott Weiner, Transitional CEO of the SCC. “We will commence construction as expeditiously as possible to meet our common goal of having the school open for September 2009. I want to thank Board President Robert Revelle for his leadership. I am confident that, working together, we will be here before September 2009 for a dedication of the school,” continued Weiner.

Important additional agreement points are that the Board and SCC are committed to:

- expediting the demolition, excavation, removal and construction activities at the MLK Jefferson Site,
- engaging other State agencies in an effort to ensure the prompt issuance of appropriate permits, so that all demolition, excavation, removal and construction activities at the Site will take place as soon as possible, and
- holding regular meetings to assure that timetables and objectives are met.

The SCC has also agreed to reimbursing the Trenton Board of Education for all documented expenditures related to the removal of 350 students from the existing Jefferson Elementary School and their placement in other locations as swing space during the 2005-2006 school year and during the upcoming 2006-2007 school year – including costs related to transportation to and from and the lease of the Holy Angels School in Hamilton.

Reimbursement will also cover utilities, insurance, labor, paraprofessional coverage and the upgrade of the leased school building to meet public school regulatory standards and building code regulations; as well as the costs of moving Jefferson students to their interim location at the former Kilmer school site on Whittlesey Road in Trenton.

“The situation has caused undue hardship on the school district, the residents of the City and taxpayers of the State,” said Board President Revelle. “In addition, it has caused community-wide concern about the effect of the contaminated soil on the health of Jefferson School students, staff and the surrounding neighborhood. The agreement that we have reached provides hope that makes it once again possible for the Trenton Board of Education to look forward to fulfilling its obligation to our students and our staff to ensure that the new school they will attend in September 2009 is safe.”

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