

Governor Christie Announces Largest School Construction Grant Program in New Jersey History

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Trenton, NJ – Governor Chris Christie announced today that nearly a half billion dollars in grants will become available for needed construction projects in school districts across New Jersey. This largest single grant program in New Jersey's history will begin with a collaborative effort between the New Jersey Department of Education (DOE) and the Schools Development Authority (SDA) in which the two state entities will release \$425 million for the 559 Regular Operating Districts (RODs) across the state and dedicate an additional \$30 million for the state's county vocational schools. Today's announcement will add to the 902 grants already executed by the Christie Administration, supporting \$644.8 million of school improvement work. More ROD Grants have been executed under the Christie Administration than any previous administration.

"In this critical time of rebuilding the Garden State, it is more important than ever for these school projects to move forward with state financial support," said Governor Christie. "With this largest single offering of grant funding in history, it is clear that this Administration is committed to providing modern and efficient educational facilities for students in all school districts across New Jersey."

"These grants will provide the additional benefit of much needed jobs in the construction trades," added SDA CEO Marc Larkins. "We hope that as many school districts as possible will take advantage of this opportunity to improve their facilities."

SDA will use the \$455 million to expand the SDA grant program for Regular Operating Districts. These state-funded ROD grants represent at least 40 percent of eligible costs for projects in the SDA school districts across the state, addressing health and safety issues, student overcrowding and other critical needs. The local districts fund the remaining cost of the projects.

The SDA will be working with the DOE to open its application process through which school projects will be selected to receive the new funding.

"I have heard from superintendents across the state that they have critical facilities needs that they would like to address, and this substantial allocation by the State will help them address those concerns without having to sacrifice their investment in what matters most – teaching and learning," added DOE Commissioner Chris Cerf.

The SDA currently has an active portfolio of 882 of grants supporting approximately \$1.6 billion in school facilities work. Since its 2001 inception, New Jersey's school construction program has provided more than 3,000 grants to RODs, totaling more than \$2.3 billion. Including contributions from local school districts, these grants have leveraged projects estimated at \$7.4 billion overall.

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