

February 2003 Monthly Report

Introduction

February marked another strong month of activity for the NJ Schools Construction Corporation (SCC). Numerous projects broke ground, many more were initiated in the procurement process and the first early childhood center was officially opened. Eleven notices to proceed were sent out for SCC managed projects in six districts totaling \$25,389,248. Bids for construction work were advertised for thirty-five schools around the state. Land acquisition activities spiked with an unprecedented twenty-three properties being authorized for offers. The Board of Directors approved partnership agreements with both the Department of Labor and the New Jersey Institute of Technology to leverage existing state resources in an effort to enhance program productivity.

1. [Construction Update](#)
2. [Program Enhancements](#)
3. [Construction Contracts](#)
4. [Contractor Procurement](#)
5. [Design Update](#)
6. [Predevelopment & Land Acquisition](#)
7. [Affirmative Action](#)
8. [School District Grants](#)
9. [Conferences/Presentations](#)

I. Construction Update

A. Construction Starts

Governor McGreevey Announces Schedule for School Openings

Governor McGreevey came to the new high school being constructed in Washington Township, Mercer County, to announce the schools scheduled to open over the next two years. The Governor highlighted the School Construction Program in terms of the positive impact it will have not only on the educational experiences of New Jersey's students, but also the economy of our state.

The SCC anticipates the opening of 254 new schools and school additions in the next two years. There will be 95 openings in districts across New Jersey in 2003, and an additional 159 in 2004. These schools will be opening in both Abbott and Non-Abbott school districts. 100 new sites will also be secured over the next two years for construction, which represents an eight-fold increase from previous years. The Governor credited the program's aggressive expansion to streamlined procedures and process management.



Architectural Rendering of the new Washington Township High School

"Education is the cornerstone of this Administration, but basics like literacy and teacher preparation can only succeed if children are being educated in safe, modern classrooms - not classes of 45 where there should be 20, or in trailer classrooms like over 12,000 children across the state are currently forced to do," said McGreevey. "But the School Construction program is investing in our schools, our communities and our children. The funds that communities receive from the School Construction program ease the property tax burden for New Jersey homeowners and allow more dollars to go directly to our children's education."

The Governor underscored the School Construction program's benefit of investing in New Jersey's children and their educational future, with the fact that it also provides residents with real property tax relief. While the state is experiencing a fiscal crisis, the effect of easing the burden on taxpayers was yet another reason for fully supporting the program's implementation. The SCC anticipates \$800 million worth of capital projects will be underway this year and another \$1.25 billion in 2004, providing a significant stimulus to our economy as well.

Burlington City Celebrates the Opening of a New Early Childhood Center



*Burlington City BOE Members, Ray Rebilas, Ralph Lollar, Tanya Dickerson,
BOE Vice President, Donna Boone, BOE President*

February saw the first opening of a school construction project in an Abbott District, as well the first early childhood learning center to be constructed through the New Jersey Educational Facilities Construction and Financing Act. The Samuel Smith School Early Childhood Learning Center in Burlington City was constructed with \$3.7 million in state funding and managed through the School Construction program.

The project involved the construction of a 15,444-square-foot addition to the existing Samuel Smith Elementary School. The ECC will help the district meet the mandatory requirements to provide full-day pre-school for three and four year olds and will allow the school district to centralize its services for that age group. It will make educational opportunities available for approximately one hundred eighty three and four year old pre-kindergarten children. The twelve new modular classrooms were built in a factory and came finished complete with bathrooms, sinks and built-in storage cabinets. Each of the modular classrooms will have a large area for instruction and a separate area for play.

[Back to top](#)

II. Program Enhancements

A. Department of Labor to Monitor Prevailing Wage Compliance

The Board of Directors also approved a Memorandum of Agreement with the NJ Department of Labor (DoL) to have that agency monitor SCC managed projects to ensure workers are being paid the prevailing wage. The DoL's Division of Wage and Hour Compliance will not only ensure that this statutory obligation under the Educational Facilities Construction and Financing Act (EFCFA) is being met, but provide the necessary expertise and administrative infrastructure to do so fairly, efficiently and comprehensively.

The DoL's staff will perform activities like reviewing contractor payroll records and perform site investigations to guarantee that companies are in fact acting in accordance with the EFCFA's prevailing wage requirements. They will coordinate with staff from the SCC's Division of Policy and Communications to guarantee fulfillment of this important statutory requirement.

B. Memorandum of Agreement with the New Jersey Institute of Technology

The Board of Directors authorized the SCC to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement with the New Jersey Institute of Technology's (NJIT) Center for Architecture and Building Science to establish the New Jersey High Performance Schools Information Center (Center). It would be part of NJIT's mission in this new Center to work to establish best practices, especially as they relate to LEED and sustainable design. Based on the needs of the SCC, NJIT will also be able to do analyses to address effectiveness of policy initiatives in the future.

NJIT would additionally act as the SCC's research and development arm for design and construction issues. The Center would help to create a model for streamlining the planning, design, construction, financing and operation of pre-k through high schools in our state. They will also do follow up viability analyses of systems' capacities to further refine baseline features. One example would be through evaluating life cycle costs. It is envisioned that NJIT could also investigate design features that translate into increased teacher and student productivity.

It is envisioned that a partnership between SCC and NJIT will provide an avenue for centralization of design issues in a Center with credibility and an explicit focus. NJIT will act as a funnel for expertise and specific design issue exploration and set up a web based resource center for information dissemination. The goal of the joint effort would ultimately be to enhance the economic and educational outcomes of the Schools Construction program.

C. Attorney General to be Appointed to SCC Board of Directors

In an effort toward furthering safeguards already in place against fraud and inefficiency at the SCC, Governor McGreevey issued Executive Order #47. The order directs that the Corporation's by-laws be amended to include the Attorney General as a member of the Board of Directors. The Attorney General's Office of Government Integrity already works to ensure that there are no improper activities occurring in the procurement process and works to screen companies for moral integrity through prequalification. Having the Attorney General as a member of the Board of Directors will ensure policy oversight of the entire agency from this perspective as well. Building this safeguard into the oversight of the SCC's operations is yet another way for the taxpayers to be assured that their money is being spent wisely.

[Back to top](#)

III. Construction Contracts

Attached is [Exhibit A](#), which details projects that have been awarded over the past month.

As of February 28, 2002, the SCC has entered into 246 construction contracts for a total amount of a little more than \$688,002,386.

[Back to top](#)

IV. Contractor Procurement

Thirty packages were advertised over the course of February for thirty-five schools in 9 schools districts. The Paterson School District had the bulk of advertised work with fourteen packages. Other districts with multiple advertisements were Millville (5), Jersey City (2), and Long Branch (2). A full breakdown of the construction bid advertisements is attached as [Exhibit B](#).

[Back to top](#)

V. Design Update

As of February 28, 2003, 117 design contracts have been issued for a total of \$60,943,393.50, since the inception of the program. Additionally, 59 architectural assignments have been assumed from districts in an amount totaling \$63,808,391.61.

[Back to top](#)

VI. Predevelopment & Land Acquisition

February also saw a previously unequaled amount of activity in land acquisition. The Board of Directors authorized formal offers on eighteen properties for five school projects in four Abbott districts. In Garfield and Union City, one property is to be purchased for construction of an Early Childhood Center in each district. Replacement of PS #20 in Jersey City will require purchasing of eight properties for construction of the pre K-5 school. Purchase offers of eight properties were also authorized in Elizabeth for construction of two pre K-8 schools, PS #29 and PS #30.

As of February 28, 2002 the Schools Construction Corporation executed 109 contracts for site acquisition activities such as title services, appraisals, site feasibility studies, as well as for the purchase of properties, in the amount of \$20,821,058.

[Back to top](#)

VII. Affirmative Action

The Office of Diversity and Emerging Markets distributed a new quarterly publication, "Diversity Digest," in February. The office envisions this informative newsletter as a key avenue of outreach to the various constituencies that the Schools Construction program touches. It will serve to outline programs that are available through that office, as well as provide specific program updates, contact information and scheduled activities. It will be distributed via e-mail and hardcopy. Additionally, future copies will be provided to the SCC's contractors and consultants.

Among the numerous other activities in February, the Office of Diversity helped to organize a seminar in Philadelphia geared toward minority-owned, women-owned and small businesses called the "Southern NJ School Construction Projects 'Bidders Qualification Day'." This free seminar provided hands-on help to contractors in completing all necessary paperwork to participate in the schools construction program, including prequalification. All with the SCC, staff from the project management firm URS, as well as the African American Chamber of Commerce helped organize and run the event.

[Back to top](#)

VIII. School District Grants

In the month of February, fifty-five Section 15 grants were executed in twenty school districts that receive less than fifty-five percent of the budgets in state aid. Those grants were for projects that totaled just over \$115,183,808, of which the state share was \$35,328,756.

Several districts advanced multiple projects through the SCC's Section 15 grant program. The Edison School District in Middlesex County received 9 grants for projects at 8 different schools

with total projects cost of \$1,481,535, with the state share encompassing \$571,654. Milburn Township School District in Essex County received grants for 6 schools with total project costs of \$17,174,366 and the state share representing \$5,242,692. The East Windsor Regional School District in Mercer County also received grants for 6 schools with total project costs totaling \$62,324,162, of which the state share was \$20,609,322.

As of February 28, 2003, the SCC has entered in 721 Section 15 grant agreements for projects with a total amount over \$2,895,859,766, of which the state share comprised \$919,405,500.

[Back to top](#)

IX. Conferences/Presentations

Samuel Smith Elementary School Open House Ceremony
February 1, 2003 Burlington City School District

Paterson Board of Education Workshop Meeting
February 3, 2003 Paterson School District

"Bidders Qualification Day", South NJ School Construction Projects
African American Chamber of Commerce
February 11, 2003 Philadelphia, PA

Planning meeting "Green Construction" sponsored by the Hunterdon County Planning Board, Hunterdon Economic Partnership and the Hunterdon County Chapter of the League of Women Voters
February 13, 2003 Raritan Township, NJ

Aura Elementary School Dedication Ceremony
February 19, 2003 Elk Township Board of Education, Glassboro, NJ

"Meet the Construction Chiefs" Professional Women in Construction Networking Event
February 25, 2003 New York City

"Train Ride to Success", NJ Transit & Conference of Minority
February 27, 2003, NY Penn Station

"Sound Off for South Jersey" Southern New Jersey Development Council Legislative Conference
February 28, 2003, Absecon, NJ

[Back to top](#)

Alfred T. McNeill, Chief Executive Officer
Prepared by George Strachan, March 26, 2003