

January 2001 Monthly Report

Introduction

During the month of January, NJEDA's school construction program focused on both short-term and long-term planning. Health and safety projects in the Abbott school districts continued to take precedence as more than \$40 million in roofing projects got underway, and approximately \$40 million in health and safety projects, each estimated to cost under \$500,000, were delegated to the Abbott districts.

The start of the 2001-2002 school year is just around the corner, which means that full-day early childhood programs for all three and four year olds will need to be in place in the Abbott districts. NJEDA, in concert with the Department of Education (DOE), is planning for temporary classroom space now to ensure that come September the necessary classroom space will be available to meet the anticipated student enrollments.

Also extremely important, is having procedures in place to ensure that all segments of the contractor and labor communities have full and fair opportunity to participate in the school construction program. We have met with various legislative, business and community groups as we develop amendments to NJEDA's affirmative action regulations and new procedures to implement the affirmative action program.

And, finally, hand-in-hand with the planning and implementation of the school facilities program, is educating the public and stakeholders about NJEDA's efforts and progress. This involved forums, workshops, meetings and conferences all focused on different aspects of the program-from environmental planning to "community schools."

The following are specific highlights of our activities.

1. [Request For Proposals for Temporary Classroom Units for Early Childhood Education](#)
2. [Forum on Health and Safety Projects Valued at \\$500,000 or Less](#)
3. [Abbott Districts' Health and Safety Projects Advance](#)
4. [Development of Affirmative Action Program](#)
5. ["Smart Growth" Community Schools Planning](#)
6. [School Facilities Conferences](#)
7. [Website Update](#)

I. **Request For Proposals for Temporary Classroom Units for Early Childhood Education**

A request for proposals (RFP) is being developed for the manufacture and installation of temporary classroom units (TCU's) so that the Abbott Districts can accommodate projected student enrollment for early childhood education for the 2001-2002 school year.

The Abbott school districts are under a State mandate to provide full-day early childhood education for three and four year olds by September 2001. The DOE estimates that the need for space for early childhood enrollment will exceed existing classroom capacity by approximately 150 classroom units. Therefore, the NJEDA is financing and arranging for the installation of temporary classrooms as "swing space" in the interim while new facilities are being renovated and/or constructed.

We anticipate issuing the RFP for TCU's to be advertised in March. Installation of the TCU's are expected to take place during the month of August in time for the start of school on September 1.

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II. **Forum on Health and Safety Projects Valued at \$500,000 or Less**

On January 31, the NJEDA hosted a forum for officials representing 19 Abbott Districts that have been given the option of immediately advancing health and safety projects, each with a current estimated cost of \$500,000 or less. Prior to the forum, the superintendents of these districts were sent an "Abbott District Health and Safety Project Grant Agreement" (the Grant Agreement) outlining the terms and conditions for the advancement of their projects, associated documents and "scopes of work" identifying the work to be performed.

Deputy Director, Beth Sztuk, presided over the two-hour forum during which attendees received answers to their questions about the documents and procedures and also had the opportunity to raise a broad range of facilities issues of importance to their school districts. Also in attendance was staff from the Procurement, Construction and Policy and Communications Divisions of the NJEDA's schools program who provided technical support and a Deputy Attorney General who provided legal counsel.

Districts opting to proceed with their projects have been requested to execute the Grant Agreement and related documentation and submit these items to the NJEDA no later than March 1. Districts, which prefer that the NJEDA retain responsibility for their projects, have been requested to notify the NJEDA immediately.

Districts undertaking their projects directly are required to procure the services of design professionals and contractors who have been prequalified by the NJEDA, and are also required to comply with the Public Schools Contract Law and the New Jersey Uniform Construction Code. NJEDA will have dual oversight responsibility for these projects with the Department of Community Affairs (DCA). A checklist has been developed by DCA that will be submitted to NJEDA as part of the requisition for payment process, which will ensure that districts are in compliance with all applicable procurement laws.

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III. **Abbott Districts' Health and Safety Projects Advance**

During January, the Abbott Selection Committees reviewed and ranked 34 proposals that were submitted by professional design firms for 31 health and safety scopes of work located in six Abbott school districts. Contracts were awarded to six firms for this work with estimated costs of construction of \$12 million. Attached is a spreadsheet that summarizes this information.

In addition, RFP's were issued to professional design firms on January 11 for emergent roofing projects in 15 Abbott districts, estimated at \$40 million. The proposals were due to the NJEDA by February 2, 2001.

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IV. **Development of Affirmative Action Program**

On January 9, NJEDA submitted proposed amendments to NJEDA's rules and regulations on affirmative action to the presiding officers and standing committees on State government of both houses of the Legislature. The proposed amendments provide for programs that will enhance the hiring of minority and female construction workers, and expand business opportunities for socially and economically disadvantaged contractors and vendors.

Also on January 9, Executive Director, Caren Franzini, and Director of Policy and Communications, Mark Lohbauer, met with members of the Governor's Office, Secretary of State and Legislative Minority Caucus to discuss the proposed regulations and receive input.

A workshop was held on January 16 to outline the goals for and solicit feedback from women and minority businesses and representatives regarding NJEDA's procedures for implementing the affirmative action program. A broad cross-section of the MBE/WBE community including, representatives of labor, private industry, advocacy organizations, higher education, and state government attended the workshop. A highly constructive exchange took place regarding the barriers that could deter full and fair access to the school construction program. The barriers

identified by participants ranged from the up-front capital needs of MBE/WBE's, to the need for positive incentives for hiring MBE/WBE firms and entrepreneurial and workforce training. These and all other comments and suggestions are currently being factored into the development of draft procedures. We expect to send the proposed regulations on affirmative action, together with the proposed procedures to the MBE/WBE community for their consideration and comment the week of February 13, 2001.

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V. **Smart Growth" Community Schools Planning**

In conjunction with the New Jersey Redevelopment Authority and the Department of Community Affairs, Office of State Planning, NJEDA met with approximately six Abbott school districts to assist them in facilitating "community school" design projects. In "community schools," the concept of education and schooling is extended beyond the traditional K-12 program. In this model, schools are not limited by traditional school schedules and programs. In collaboration with other community agencies, businesses and organizations, a wide variety of educational, recreational, human services and workforce preparation needs are provided for people of all ages.

For example, school and public libraries can be combined in a single facility to offer curriculum support while also providing for the broader library service needs of community residents. Schools and park/recreation departments can share a facility, which allows the two parties to split the cost and double the benefits to local citizens.

As part of the strategy for achieving the goals of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan, the Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs, Jane Kenny, awarded nearly \$300,000 in "Smart Growth Community Schools Planning Grants." These monies will be used for planning community school design features. At the same time, we recognize that State funds under the school facilities program can only be used for elements of the rebuilding program that fall within the facilities "efficiency" standards. Therefore, the EDA will assist districts in identifying potential funding sources for costs of those additional community features that State funding will not cover.

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VI. **School Facilities Conferences**

Presentations concerning the NJEDA's implementation of the school construction program were made at the following conferences:

Energy and Environmental Issues January 12, 2001, Stockton State College, Pomona, New Jersey

The Educational Facilities Construction and Financing Law provides that the design of school facilities should incorporate maximum operating efficiencies and new technologies to advance energy efficiency of school facilities and the efficiency of other school building systems. This presentation focused on ways that the NJEDA will utilize energy efficient design specifications for school facilities projects.

Smart Schools, Smart Growth and Abbott Implementation January 19, 2001, Rutgers University, Busch Campus Center, Piscataway, New Jersey

This presentation outlined the NJEDA's commitment to facilitating "community school" design projects.

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VII. **Website Update**

NJEDA has added the list of prequalified contractors, together with their addresses, contact information and classifications. In addition, information continues to be added to the schools web page at njedaschools.com.

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Caren S. Franzini, Executive Director
Prepared by Barbara J. Bohi, February 13, 2001