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NEWS RELEASE:

Governor Jon S. Corzine
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GOVERNOR CORZINE SIGNS LEGISLATION REPLACING NEW JERSEY SCHOOLS CONSTRUCTION CORPORATION

TRENTON - Governor Jon S. Corzine today signed legislation dissolving the New Jersey Schools Construction Corporation (SCC) and replacing it with the New Jersey Schools Development Authority (SDA). The reorganization is immediate and places the new SDA in but not of the Department of Treasury.

"The reorganization of the SCC is testimony to the commitment of this administration to implement reforms that put an end to the waste and mismanagement of the past," said Governor Corzine. "We now have a more streamlined entity with the proper controls in place. This will ensure more efficient delivery of quality schools which are greatly needed across the state."

The New Jersey Schools Development Authority will focus solely on the construction of schools in the Abbott districts while the New Jersey Economic Development Authority retains the responsibility to provide financing for school facilities projects.

Also contained in the legislation are other reforms that will strengthen the school construction program, including changes to land acquisition policies and procedures and a new process to sequence projects in the Abbott districts based on educational priorities and needs. Furthermore, the legislation provides greater authority to the Abbott districts to manage their own projects if they successfully demonstrate the capacity to do so.

The new authority will consist of the Commissioner of Education, the Commissioner of Community Affairs, the CEO of the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, the State Treasurer, and 11 public members, up from the original seven. The public members will be appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate and will serve five-year terms.

Barry Zubrow, who served as chairman of the SCC Board of Directors, has been

appointed to continue as the Chairman of the Authority. He and four other public members of the SCC board will immediately begin serving in an interim capacity on the new SDA board. Their nominations for a full term will be submitted to the State Senate when it reconvenes in the fall. The four other public members are: Joseph McNamara, Laurence M. Downes, Gabriella Morris and Carmen Twillie Ambar.

Scott Weiner will head the SDA, continuing in his capacity as CEO. Weiner was appointed in February 2006 as the Governor's Special Counsel on School Construction and was appointed permanent CEO in September 2006.

"We need to put a system in place to ensure that the previous mistakes of the old Schools Construction Corporation never happen again," said Assemblyman Craig Stanley (D-Essex), chairman of the Assembly Education Committee. "These structural reforms will go a long way toward restoring public confidence in the state's efforts to provide New Jersey students with modern school buildings and quality educations."

"Before the state spends another dime on school construction, we need an accountability system to protect taxpayer dollars," said Assemblyman Jeff Van Drew (D-Cape May/Cumberland/Atlantic). "The state needs a structure in place to build better schools while preventing new scandals of waste, fraud, and abuse."

"One of our most important responsibilities is to provide an adequate education to all of New Jersey's students, and part-and-parcel with that obligation comes the need to provide safe, up-to-date buildings for that education to take place," said Senator Joseph V. Doria, D-Hudson. "With the Schools Construction Corporation, greed and internal abuse ultimately damaged a worthwhile program beyond repair. By establishing the Schools Development Authority, we can begin a new model for building schools in New Jersey, free from the tainted past of the SCC."

"The mission of the old SCC remains as urgent as ever, but it was clear that we needed to reform the way in which we build those schools before the State could afford to spend another dime in building new schools. The NJSDA will bring the transparency and accountability to the schools construction process that had been sorely missed," added Senator Turner, D-Mercer and Chair of the Senate Education Committee.

Sponsors of the legislation were Assemblyman Craig Stanley (District 28); Assemblyman Wilfredo Caraballo (District 29); Assemblywoman Nellie Pou (District 35); Assemblyman Jeff Van Drew (District 1); Assemblyman Joseph Vas (District 19) and Assemblyman Gary Schaer (District 36). The Senate sponsors were Senator Joseph Doria (District 31) and Senator Shirley Turner (District 15).

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