



Education Law Center

60 Park Place, Suite 300
Newark, New Jersey 07102
(973) 624-1815 Fax: (973) 624-7339
Email: elc@edlawcenter.org

NEWS RELEASE

ELC CALLS ON LEGISLATURE TO FUND URGENTLY NEEDED SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

Newark, February 16, 2006 — Education Law Center is calling on the NJ Legislature and Governor Jon Corzine to act quickly to approve funding to restart work on over 96 stalled school construction projects in urban communities, and to provide the state share of another 35 projects in suburban districts.

In a [report](#) issued to Legislative leaders today, the Acting Commissioner of Education identifies 96 school construction projects in urban districts that are “in design” but have been under a “stop work order” from the State Schools Construction Program (SCC) since last September. The report estimates the cost of completing these projects at \$5.3 billion.

At least 35 projects in suburban communities are also on hold, despite approval by local voters, because the SCC has run out of funds and cannot provide the state share of \$154 million promised for these projects.

“The Legislature and Governor now have all the information they need to act,” said David G. Sciarra, ELC Executive Director. “These needs presented in today’s report are urgent, are not going away, and require immediate funding. We must not let our children wait any longer for safe and adequate schools.”

“We’re ready to work with the Governor and legislative leaders to get a funding bill enacted, with appropriate accountability measures, as quickly as possible,” Mr. Sciarra added.

ELC is also urging the Governor to continue efforts to insure the school construction program is cost effective, especially in the area of administration and project management.

Today’s report is in response to NJ Supreme Court order issued last December in the landmark *Abbott v. Burke* education reform litigation. ELC -- which represents the school children in the *Abbott* case -- asked for a detailed accounting of outstanding projects and their estimated cost, as required by the *Abbott* rulings and the state school construction law.

Related Reading: [Full Text of NJDOE News Release of February 16, 2006](#)

Education Law Center Press Contact:

David G. Sciarra
Executive Director
email: dsciarra@edlawcenter.org
voice: 973 624-1815 x16

Education Law Center is a non-profit advocacy organization working to make high quality public education available to all children. ELC serves the children of New Jersey, and assists education advocates throughout the nation.

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