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GOVERNOR'S WORK GROUP PROPOSES SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION REFORMS FAILS TO RECOMMEND NEW FUNDING TO RESTART STALLED PROJECTS

Governor Jon Corzine's Work Group on School Construction released [an initial report](#) on March 15th, as required by Executive Order No. 3. The report proposes significant structural changes in the school construction program, many of which Education Law Center supports. However, the report fails to recommend any time frame for securing additional funding to restart over 100 stalled building projects across the state.

Among the key reforms presented in the report are:

- Building new schools to serve as a catalyst for community development and land use planning
- Designing and building with an emphasis on quality in order to serve generations to come
- Establishing a new authority to manage the program
- Allowing urban districts to oversee and manage projects
- Giving districts responsibility for land acquisition
- Developing priorities for projects based on district need.

While these structural reforms are long overdue, the report fails to provide any time frame for moving stalled projects forward with additional funding. The report admits, for the first time, that the State cannot complete all of the 59 urban projects in the July 2005 capital plan because the cost of those projects has jumped \$300-400 million, mostly due to inflation. In addition, there are another 136 urban and suburban projects that are stalled due to a lack of funds.

"We applaud the long term reforms for school construction," said David Sciarra, ELC Executive Director. "However, the Governor needs an emergency plan to get the State ready to move on the stalled projects, and to provide more funding. Every day of delay drives up the cost of these projects, and to the taxpayers, not to mention causing educational and neighborhood disruption in local communities."

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