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PRESS RELEASE

WORK GROUP TO RECOMMEND MORE CONSTRUCTION FUNDS BY AUGUST WILL GOVERNOR CORZINE FOLLOW THROUGH?

Newark, NJ -- May 17, 2006

In its **second progress report**, Governor Jon Corzine's Working Group announced it will finalize reforms to the school construction program by August, including a recommendation for additional funds to restart numerous school facilities projects across the state. The Working Group stressed that the new funding is required to address pressing school facilities needs in Abbott and non-Abbott districts. Many projects have been stalled for nearly a year due to the failure the Legislature to commit more funds to the program.

By August, the Working Group is expected to recommend specific changes to the present program operated by the State Schools Construction Corporation (SCC). More effective working relationships between the SCC, the State Education Department, local districts, municipalities, and communities will be a centerpiece for the new reforms.

A strategic plan for construction projects will be proposed, with a development schedule based on program priorities. A capital plan will also be developed to allocate the funding needed to carry out the work. The State will implement a project management reporting system, including budgets covering all project-related costs, schedules and monthly updates. In addition, the Working Group is preparing statutory amendments to address changes for corporate governance, land acquisition, greater involvement of school districts and municipalities, and additional procurement options for construction of schools.

"Finally, we now have a firm date for finishing up reforms to the school construction program," said David Sciarra, ELC Executive Director and Abbott Counsel. "We expect Governor Corzine to follow through for our school children by making an immediate funding request to the Legislature in August. We're ready to work with the Governor to secure speedy legislative approval of the new funds, so we can restart stalled projects when children return to school in September."

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