



NJ Work Environment Council  
172 West State Street, 2nd Floor  
Trenton, NJ 08608

April 9, 2019

The Honorable Phil Murphy  
Governor of New Jersey  
P.O. Box 001  
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Governor Murphy,

As members of Healthy Schools Now, we are writing to you about the immediate need for school construction funding. We are a coalition of more than 55 organizations representing school staff, administrators, parents, labor unions, and faith-based, civic, environmental and community organizations. Formed in 2012, HSN is dedicated to ensuring that all of New Jersey's children and school employees learn and work in safe, healthy, and modern school buildings.

The Schools Development Authority (SDA) is responsible for managing the design and construction of school facilities projects in New Jersey's 31 SDA Districts. It is also required to finance 100 percent of the costs. Now, and in

the future, SDA faces significant resource challenges in addressing the broad scope of its statutory and constitutional obligations.

The SDA has either spent or committed all of the funds approved by the Legislature in 2008. Beyond the 25 major SDA district projects in the current capital plan, it is unable to finance significant unmet construction needs. Furthermore, no funds remain to support school construction grants in non-SDA districts, known as “Regular Operating Districts,” or RODs. These grants augment local funds, enabling districts to pay for needed facilities projects while minimizing the impact on property taxpayers.

Tremendous needs remain in both SDA and ROD districts. In the most recently approved Long Range Facilities Plans (LRFP), the 31 SDA districts identified 381 additional—and critical—major construction projects. With existing bonding authority already allocated to projects in the pipeline, action must be taken soon to approve additional bonding, or to identify alternate funds, to meet the needs outlined in the LRFPs.

Representatives of the HSN coalition request a meeting with you to discuss these and other school construction policy-related issues. Please ask someone from your staff to contact Heather Sorge, the campaign organizer for Healthy Schools Now, at 908-310-7874, to arrange for a meeting.

We look forward to working with you to ensure that all of New Jersey's students attend schools that are healthy, safe, and conducive to student achievement.

Sincerely,

Heather L. Sorge, Campaign Organizer, Healthy Schools Now

Debra Coyle McFadden, Executive Director, NJ Work Environment Council

Marie Blistan, President, New Jersey Education Association

David Sciarra, Executive Director, Education Law Center

William Colón, President and CEO, Latino Institute, Inc.

Rose Acerra, President, New Jersey Parent Teacher Association

Donna M. Chiera, President, American Federation of Teachers New Jersey

Patricia Wright, Executive Director, New Jersey Principals and Supervisors  
Association

Dr. Richard Bozza, Executive Director, NJ Association of School  
Administrators

Julie Borst, Executive Director, Save Our Schools NJ

Gregory Stankiewicz, Coordinator, NJ Community Schools Coalition

Jesse Burns, Executive Director, League of Women Voters of New Jersey

Trina Scordo, MSW, Executive Director, NJ Communities United

Elisabeth Ginsburg, Executive Director, Garden State Coalition of Schools

Thomas Puryear, President, Oranges and Maplewood NAACP

Elizabeth Smith, Executive Director, Statewide Education Organizing  
Committee

Louis Kimmel, Executive Director, New Labor

Charles Bergman, Director, Esperanza Neighborhood Project, New Brunswick

Melissa Tomlinson, Interim Executive Director, Badass Teachers Association

Susan Clark, President, Gloucester County Education Association

Lois Yukna, President, Middlesex County Education Association  
Sue Butterfield, President, Passaic County Education Association  
Dan Epstein, President, Somerset County Education Association  
Susan J. Sawey, President, Sussex County Education Association  
Lisa D. Palin, President, Union County Education Association  
Lori E. Lalama, President, Clifton Teachers' Association  
Frank Gatto, President, Hamilton Township Education Association  
Twanda Taylor, President, Trenton Education Association  
Louis Russo, President, Vineland Education Association

Cc:

George Helmy, Chief of Staff, Governor Phil Murphy's Office  
Matthew Platkin, Chief Counsel, Governor Phil Murphy's Office  
Cory Booker, United States Senator

