



New Jersey School Boards Association

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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Voters Approve \$125 million in School Construction Projects

TRENTON, September 27, 2006—Voters in nine of 17 school districts approved more than \$125 million in school-construction spending on Tuesday, according to the New Jersey School Boards Association.

A total of 17 school construction proposals totaling \$334.9 million were placed on the ballot on Tuesday, one of the five dates a year that a school board can propose a bond referendum. The previous bond elections this year were held in January, March and April, and the last remaining bond election date of the year will be Dec. 12.

So far in 2006, voters have approved 23 of 37 school-construction proposals that total a quarter billion dollars. The 62 percent success rate for school-construction proposals so far this year is slightly higher than the 58 percent approval rate of 2005—but still well behind the average 74-percent success rate of the previous five years, when voters could rely on upfront state grants to offset construction costs covered by local property taxes.

State School-Construction Aid

Under the Educational Facilities Construction and Financing Act of 2000, school districts have been receiving a minimum of 40 percent state-determined “eligible” construction costs. Before the state funding became available, 240 districts received no state funds for school construction and another 108 received less than 25 percent from the state—leaving property taxes to cover most or all of school construction costs.

State funding came through up-front grants until the grants were depleted last year. Currently, the state meets its 40-percent obligation by reimbursing school districts through annual installments of state debt service aid over the life of the district’s borrowing. For the 2006-2007 state budget, Gov. Corzine recommended sufficient funding to cover the authorized amounts of debt service aid.

A task force reviewing New Jersey’s school construction program recommended earlier this month that the state invest an additional \$750 million in grants for non-Abbott districts, and \$2.5 billion in new funding for Abbott districts, which do not need voter approval as 100% of school construction in those districts is covered by the state, and.

“The task force recommendations for additional state funds demonstrate that the need for new facilities has not diminished,” said Edwina M. Lee, NJSBA executive director. “School children throughout the state need adequate and safe school facilities.”

Results of the Sept. 26 ballot follow.

New Jersey School Construction Referendums Tuesday, September 26, 2006

STATEWIDE

Total amount approved: \$125,496,671 (\$334,924,590 proposed)

BERGEN COUNTY

Leonia—Rejected

Purchase property adjacent to high school campus and early childhood center for school facilities project identified in district's long-range plan

Total project cost - \$699,000

CAMDEN COUNTY

Black Horse Pike Regional—Rejected

Renovations, and/or additions to three high schools

Total project cost - \$61,170,344

Gloucester Township—Rejected

Replacement of roofs at one elementary school and two middle schools

Total project cost - \$7,806,645

ESSEX COUNTY

Millburn—Approved

Additions and renovations to high school and middle school

Total project cost - \$21,302,000 (19.6 percent qualifies for state debt service aid)

GLOUCESTER COUNTY

Franklin Township—Approved

Renovations and additions to elementary school

Total project cost - \$1,359,529 (22.2 percent qualifies for debt service aid)

HUNTERDON COUNTY

Milford Borough—Rejected

Renovations to elementary school

Total project cost - \$3,175,000

Stockton Borough—Approved

Structural repairs at elementary school

Total project cost - \$542,306 (40 percent qualifies for state debt service aid)

MONMOUTH COUNTY

Manasquan Borough—Rejected

Improvements to the high school athletic fields and facilities, including land acquisition

Total project cost \$4,980,000

Oceanport—Approved

Renovations of middle school and elementary school

Total project cost - \$2,135,500 (40 percent qualifies for state debt service aid)

Shore Regional—Rejected

Renovations and improvements to high school, athletic facilities and fields

Total project cost - \$49,797,221

MORRIS COUNTY

Kinnelon—Approved

Addition and renovations to high school

Total project cost - \$12,654,095 (14.73 percent qualifies for state debt service aid)

Pequannock Township—Rejected (both questions)

Proposal 1: Addition and renovation to high school, middle school and three elementary schools

Total project cost - \$29,950,000

Proposal 2 (contingent upon approval of Proposal 1): Additional renovations and/or further additions at high school and three elementary schools

Total project cost - \$8,400,000

OCEAN COUNTY

Eagleswood Township—Approved

Renovations to elementary school

Total project cost - \$1,666,369 (40 percent qualifies for debt service aid)

Little Egg Harbor Township—Rejected (both questions)

Proposal 1: Construction of a new elementary school and renovations and improvements to an existing elementary school and a middle school

Total project cost - \$23,406,937

Proposal 2 (contingent on approval of Proposal 1): Renovations and improvements at intermediate and elementary school.

Total project cost - \$12,162,886

Ocean Township—Proposal 1 Approved; Proposal 2 Rejected

Proposal 1: Renovations at two elementary schools

Total project cost - \$8,100,503 (49.7 percent qualifies for state debt service aid)

Proposal 2 (contingent on approval of Proposal 1): Construction of a new gym and administrative offices.

Total project cost - \$5,383,311

SUSSEX COUNTY

Sparta Township—Proposal 1 Approved; Proposal 2 Rejected

Proposal 1: Additions and renovations to high school

Total project cost - \$71,513,519 (13.56 percent qualifies for debt service aid)

Proposal 2 (subject to approval of Proposal 1): Installation of artificial turf, bleachers and press box at high school athletic fields

Total project cost - \$2,496,575

Vernon Township—Approved

Renovations to high school and two elementary schools

Total project cost - \$6,222,850 (49.36 percent qualifies for debt service aid)

The New Jersey School Boards Association, a federation of district boards of education, advocates the interests of school districts, trains local school board members, and provides resources for the advancement of public education.

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