



Thursday, May 27th, 2010

Governor Chris Christie
Office of the Governor
State of New Jersey
P.O. Box 001
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

Dear Governor Christie,

I am writing regarding the status of state funding for the Connors Elementary School.

I know that absolutely every dollar that is spent by the State must be spent wisely, so before I sent off a letter requesting your assistance, I went for a tour of the Connors School to understand the potential implications of losing the funding for refurbishing this project.

After seeing the damage firsthand, I can assure you that this is not a cosmetic waste of money, but a critical project that needs to be funded for the well-being of the students.

Please let me explain the safety issues:

- As I toured the building, evidence of structural damage was everywhere. A room for early childhood education was deemed unsafe for the children that nap on the floor because of a two inch gap that kept recurring in the wall. The students had to be vacated, and thankfully, a partnership was developed with a private entity, St. Francis Parish, to provide space for the 84 three and four-year-olds.
- The foundation is sinking and is close to creating a structural danger for the children. The building is located in a flood zone, and the latest engineering report completed two months ago found that 130 piles are needed in the sub-basement to stabilize the foundation. Asked if the structure is a danger for the children, the facilities director told me: "Not quite yet, but we are reaching that point very soon."
- A victim of corruption, the school's roof leaked soon after it its installation by the School Development Authority in 2001. The contractor responsible eventually went to jail for another project, and as a result the warranty was never put into effect.

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

- Rain and water damage is a constant problem. Nearly every time it rains, desks have to be pulled away from the exterior walls because the water enters through them. Bleach is used to fight the mold, and engineers have to constantly check for black mold and pull out tiles to ensure the safety of the children.
- In 2003, the State installed what was supposed to be a temporary addition to address the leaky walls, but that fix has since become a permanent solution which itself leaks at the section where it is joined to the old building.
- Plaster falls from the ceiling, and the school has to constantly check for weak areas and remove the plaster to prevent it from hitting the children.

This school has served over 400 Pre-K through 8th grade children, including our City's most needy -- many from the Housing Authority.

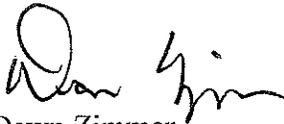
The design phase of the project is complete, having gone through a comprehensive public process in January, 2010. We are ready for the construction phase.

Funding for the project has been in limbo for more than seven years. Three times, the school has gone through a thorough review, and three times it has been declared as an essential project that must be funded by the State.

Governor, this project cannot wait three more years. I write this letter not only to plead for your assistance, but to warn you that waiting could have dire consequences for everyone involved.

Contingency plans for this construction and the relocation required to perform repairs have disrupted all of the public schools including three charter schools in Hoboken. It is essential that we receive a response with the status of this project as quickly as possible, so I am requesting a meeting with your office to discuss the urgency of this project.

Sincerely,



Dawn Zimmer
Mayor, City of Hoboken

Cc: Mr. Marc D. Larkins, CEO, Schools Development Authority
Commissioner Bret Schundler, Department of Education
Mr. Brian P. Stack, Senator
Mr. Ruben J. Ramos, Assemblyman
Hoboken Superintendent Peter Carter
Hoboken School Board members
Hoboken City Council