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Commissioner of Education William L. Librera Joins SCC, Local Officials to Announce State's Latest School Renaissance Zone in Union City, Hudson County

Continuing the Gov. James E. McGreevey Administration's commitment to education and community rebirth, Commissioner of Education William L. Librera today joined John Spencer, CEO of the NJ Schools Construction Corporation (SCC) and local officials in Union City to announce the state's fourth School Renaissance Zone.

The new Union City arts integrated magnet school will be built as the anchor to a School Renaissance Zone in the old "Transfer Station" area of downtown Union City. The new school leads a rebirth of homes and redevelopment endeavors - as well as an improved traffic flow.

"I am so very pleased to join the Union City School District and other officials whose commitment to education and rebuilding this fine community is second to none," Commissioner Librera said. "This is a great day. We are encouraged by the good work in education in Union City and we look forward to continued success in the future."

School Renaissance Zones were first announced by Gov. McGreevey this past March. By targeting existing public, private and non-profit resources, the School Renaissance Zone program identifies projects that will serve as catalysts for redevelopment and investment in neighborhoods surrounding school development.

"Improving the quality of education is a critical part of making our neighborhoods and communities central places to live and raise families," Gov. McGreevey said. "This Administration remains steadfast in its commitment to education. We will continue to build stronger communities with education as a backbone to such development."

The Union City project is the fourth announced thus far in the state, joining Trenton, Neptune and Paterson. Such projects are made possible through collaborations between state agencies like the Department of Education (DOE), Economic Development Authority (EDA) and the Schools Construction Corporation (SCC).

The state of New Jersey, under Gov. McGreevey's continued leadership, has invested more than \$8.6 billion in the renovation and construction of new schools.

In total, the Administration is building 21st century classrooms in over 1,300 schools around the state. Friday's Union City announcement is a shining example of the progress made and the progress to come, Commissioner Librera said.

"New Jersey is investing more than \$8.6 billion in the renovation and construction of new schools. SCC and our state partners will work diligently with the City to ensure this state investment produces a community of learning for the children of Union City, and a national model of urban redevelopment," said John Spencer, CEO of the NJ Schools Construction Corporation.

"The School Renaissance program compliments Governor McGreevey's plan to encourage smart growth throughout our state by prioritizing access to state funds in communities in need of revitalization," Spencer added.

Approved by the DOE in May 2003, the Union City new arts integrated magnet school will be a K-8 program for more than 700 students. The district has been working with the Park Theater, a local community theater group, as part of the project. The magnet school will include a theater will be used both by the school and the theater group for live performances.

In addition to the theater, the 132,583 square foot school will include a dance studio, photography studio, set production studio, vocal and instrumental music rooms, and a music practice room. The new school will be located one block from the Edison School, one of the largest elementary schools in the state with 1,700 students. The city recreation center is also one block away.

The new magnet K-8 school is one of 11 new school projects being developed by New Jersey Schools Construction Corporation in Union City. The magnet school project has a construction cost estimate \$17.1 million. Construction is expected to begin construction in Sept 2005 and with school opening by September of 2007.

The proposed School Renaissance Zone is located in the southern gateway to Union City along the borders of Jersey City and Hoboken. The neighborhood's rebirth is further helped by its proximity to the New Jersey Transit Light Rail System and the Union City Urban Enterprise Zone.

For more information, please contact the Department of Education Public Information Office at (609) 292-1126.