



State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Governor

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Lt. Governor

DAVID C. HUSPE
Commissioner

February 18, 2016

Dr. James Pedersen, Superintendent
ESSEX COUNTY
Essex County Vocational Technical School District
60 Nelson Place- 1 North
Newark, NJ 07102

Re: Approval of Long-Range Facilities Plan-Major Amendment
(Major Amendment; Enrollment and Educational Adequacy Impact)

Dear Dr. Pennella:

The Department of Education (Department) has completed its review of the proposed amendment to the approved Long-Range Facilities Plan (LRFP or Plan) submitted by the Essex County Vocational School District (District) pursuant to the Educational Facilities Construction and Financing Act, P.L. 2000, c. 72 (N.J.S.A. 18A: 7G-1 *et seq.*), as amended by P.L. 2007, c. 137 (Act), N.J.A.C. 6A:26 -1 *et seq.* (Educational Facilities Code), and the Facilities Efficiency Standards (FES). The amendment includes the following changes to the LRFP previously approved on February 18, 2011:

- **The re-opening and an addition and alterations to the West Caldwell Facility,**
- **Enrollment Projections**

The amendment submission includes updates to the Department's LRFP website and the submission of required supporting documentation, including a Board of Education resolution authorizing the amendment.

The Department has approved the District's LRFP amendment submission, which is reflected in the attached "Summary of the Long-Range Facilities Plan. **The approved LRFP amendment fulfills LRFP reporting requirements for a period of five years from the date of this letter per N.J.S.A. 18A: 7G-4 (a) unless the LRFP needs to be further amended to address a proposed school facilities project that is inconsistent with the approved Plan.** The approval of the LRFP amendment, and thus the approved amended LRFP, supersedes all former LRFP approvals and replaces all prior versions of the LRFP. Unless and until a new amendment is submitted to and approved by the Department pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7G-4(c), this approved LRFP shall remain in effect.

Approval of the LRFP, and any projects and costs listed therein, does not imply approval of an individual school facilities project or its corresponding costs and eligibility for State support under the Act. Similarly, approval of the LRFP does not imply approval of portions of the Plan that are inconsistent with the Department's FES and proposed building demolition or replacement. Determination of preliminary eligible costs and final eligible costs will be made at the time of the approval of a particular school facilities project pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7G-5. The District must submit a feasibility study as part of the school facilities project approval process, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7G-7b, to support proposed building demolition or replacement. The feasibility study should demonstrate that a building might pose a risk to the safety of the occupants after rehabilitation or that rehabilitation is not cost-effective.

Please contact Anthony Brun, County Manager at the Office of School Facilities, at telephone number (609) 984-7818 or email at anthony.brun@doe.state.nj.us with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



Bernard E. Piaia, Jr.
Director, Office of School Facilities and Finance

BEP: ab
Enclosure

- c: David C. Hesper, Commissioner
- Robert Bumpus, Assistant Commissioner, Division of Field Services
- Joseph Zarra, Executive Essex County Superintendent
- Anthony Abbaleo, Essex Vocational School District Business Administrator
- Susan Kutner, Deputy Director, Office of School Facilities and Finance
- Anthony Brun, Manager, Office of School Facilities

Summary of the Amendment Long-Range Facilities Plan

The Department of Education (Department) has completed its review of the Long-Range Facilities Plan (LRFP or Plan) amendment submitted by the Essex County Vocational School District (District) pursuant to the Educational Facilities Construction and Financing Act, P.L. 2000, c. 72 (N.J.S.A. 18A: 7G-1 *et seq.*), as amended by P.L. 2007, c. 137 (Act), N.J.A.C. 6A:26-1 *et seq.* (Educational Facilities Code), and the Facilities Efficiency Standards (FES).

This is the Department’s summary of the District’s LRFP, as amended February 17, 2016. The summary is based on the standards set forth in the Act, the Educational Facilities Code, the FES, District-entered data in the Department’s LRFP website, and District-supplied supporting documentation. The referenced reports in *italic* text are standard LRFP reports available on the Department’s LRFP website.

1. Inventory Overview

The District provides services for students in grades 9-12. The predominant existing school grade configuration is 9-12. The predominant proposed school grade configuration is 9-12. The District is classified as an "Under 55" district for funding purposes.

The District identified existing and proposed schools, sites, buildings, playgrounds, playfields, and parking lots in its LRFP. The total number of existing and proposed district-owned or leased schools, sites, and buildings are listed in Table 1. A detailed description of each asset can be found in the LRFP website report titled "*Site Asset Inventory Report.*"

Table 1: Inventory Summary

	Existing	Proposed
Sites:		
Total Number of Sites	4	4
Number of Sites with no Buildings	0	0
Number of Sites with no Instructional Buildings	2	2
Schools and Buildings:		
Total Number of Schools	2	3
Total Number of Instructional Buildings	2	3
Total Number of Administrative and Utility Buildings	2	2
Total Number of Athletic Facilities	0	0
Total Number of Parking Facilities	0	0
Total Number of Temporary Facilities	0	0

As directed by the Department, incomplete school facilities projects that have project approval from the Department are represented as “existing” in the Plan. District schools with incomplete approved projects that include new construction or the reconfiguration of existing program space are as follows: n/a.

Major conclusions are as follows:

- The District is proposing to maintain the existing number of District-owned or leased sites.
- The District is proposing to increase the existing number of District-owned or operated schools.
- The District is proposing to maintain the existing number of District-owned or leased instructional buildings. The District is proposing to maintain the existing number of District-owned or leased non-instructional buildings.

FINDINGS The Department has determined that the proposed inventory is adequate for review of the District’s LRFP. However, the LRFP determination does not imply approval of an individual school facilities project listed within the LRFP. The District must submit individual project applications for project approval. If building demolition or replacement is proposed, the District must submit a feasibility study, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7G-7b, as part of the application for the specific school facilities project.

2. District Enrollments and School Grade Alignments

The District determined the number of students, or “proposed enrollments,” to be accommodated in the LRFP on a district-wide basis and in each school. The District’s existing and proposed enrollments are listed in Table 2. Detailed information can be found in the LRFP website report titled “*Enrollment Projection Detail.*” Existing and proposed school enrollments and grade alignments can be found in the report titled “*Enrollment and School Grade Alignment.*”

Table 2: Enrollment Comparison

	Actual Enrollments 2014 school year	District Proposed Enrollments
Grades K-12:		
Grades K-5, including SCSE	0	0
Grades 6-8, including SCSE	0	0
Grades 9-12, including SCSE	2,240	2,285
Pre-Kindergarten:		
Pre-Kindergarten, Age 3	0	0
Pre-Kindergarten, Age 4	0	0
Pre-Kindergarten, SCSE	0	0
District Totals	2,240	2,285

“SCSE” = *Self-Contained Special Education*

Major conclusions are as follows:

- Supporting documentation was submitted to the Department as required to justify the proposed enrollments.
- The District is planning for increasing enrollments.
- The District is not an ECPA (Early Childhood Program Aid) District.

FINDINGS The Department has determined that the District’s proposed enrollments are supportable for review of the District’s LRFP. The Department will require a current enrollment projection at the time an application for a school facilities project is submitted incorporating the District’s most recent Fall Enrollment Report in order to verify that the LRFP’s planned capacity is appropriate for the updated enrollments.

3. FES and District Practices Capacity

The proposed room inventories for each school were analyzed to determine whether the LRFP provides adequate capacity for the proposed enrollments. Two capacity calculation methods, called “*FES Capacity*” and “*District Practices Capacity*,” were used to assess existing and proposed school capacity in accordance with the FES and District program delivery practices. A third capacity calculation, called “*Functional Capacity*,” determines Unhoused Students and potential State support for school facilities projects. Functional Capacity is analyzed in Section 5 of this Summary.

- *FES Capacity* only assigns capacity to pre-kindergarten (if district-owned or operated), kindergarten, general, and self-contained special education classrooms. No other room types are considered to be capacity-generating. Class size is based on the FES and is prorated for classrooms that are sized smaller than FES classrooms. FES Capacity is most accurate for elementary schools, or schools with non-departmentalized programs, in which instruction is “homeroom” based. This capacity calculation may also be accurate for middle schools depending upon the program structure. However, this method usually significantly understates available high school capacity since specialized spaces that are typically provided in lieu of general classrooms are not included in the capacity calculations.
- *District Practices Capacity* allows the District to include specialized room types in the capacity calculations and adjust class size to reflect actual practices. This calculation is used to review capacity and enrollment coordination in middle and high schools.

A capacity utilization factor in accordance with the FES is included in both capacity calculations. A 90% capacity utilization rate is applied to classrooms serving grades K-8. An 85% capacity utilization rate is applied to classrooms serving grades 9-12. No capacity utilization factor is applied to preschool classrooms.

Table 3 provides a summary of existing and proposed district-wide capacities. Detailed information can be found in the LRFP website report titled “*FES and District Practices Capacity*.”

Table 3: FES and District Practices Capacity Summary

	Total FES Capacity	Total District Practices Capacity
(A) Proposed Enrollments	2,285	2,285
(B) Existing Capacity	1,548.02	2,315.40
*Existing Capacity Status (B)-(A)	-736.98	30.40
(C) Proposed Capacity	1,788.08	2,374.90
*Proposed Capacity Status (C)-(A)	-496.92	89.90

* Positive numbers signify surplus capacity; negative numbers signify inadequate capacity. Negative values for District Practices capacity are acceptable if proposed enrollments do not exceed 100% capacity utilization.

Major conclusions are as follows:

- The District has appropriately coordinated proposed school capacities and enrollments in the LRFP.
- Adequate justification has been provided by the District if capacity for a school deviates from the proposed enrollments by more than 5%.

FINDINGS The Department has determined that the proposed District capacity, in accordance with the proposed enrollments, is adequate for review of the District’s LRFP. The Department will require a current enrollment projection at the time an application for a school facilities project is submitted, incorporating the District’s most recent Fall Enrollment Report, in order to verify that the LRFP’s planned capacity meets the District’s updated enrollments.

4. Functional Capacity and Unhoused Students

Functional capacity and unhoused student calculations are not applicable for vocational technical or special services school districts. This determination does not include an assessment of eligible square feet for State support. State support eligibility will be determined at the time an application for a specific school facilities project is submitted to the Department.

5. Proposed Work

The District was instructed to review the condition of its facilities and sites and to propose corrective “system” and “inventory” actions in its LRFP. “System” actions upgrade existing conditions without changing spatial configuration or size. Examples of system actions include new windows, finishes, and mechanical systems. “Inventory” actions address space problems by removing, adding, or altering sites, schools, buildings and rooms. Examples of inventory actions include building additions, the reconfiguration of existing walls, or changing room use.

Table 5 summarizes the type of work proposed in the District’s LRFP for instructional buildings. Detailed information can be found in the LRFP website reports titled “Site Asset Inventory,” “LRFP Systems Actions Summary,” and “LRFP Inventory Actions Summary.”

Table 5: Proposed Work for Instructional Buildings

Type of Work	Work Included in LRFP
System Upgrades	Yes
Inventory Changes	
Room Reassignment or Reconfiguration	Yes
Building Addition	Yes
New Building	No
Partial or Whole Building Demolition or Discontinuation of Use	Yes
New Site	No

Major conclusions are as follows:

- a. The District has proposed system upgrades in one or more instructional buildings.
- b. The District has proposed inventory changes, including new construction, in one or more instructional buildings.
- c. The District has proposed new construction in lieu of rehabilitation in one or more instructional buildings.

Please note that costs represented in the LRFP are for capital planning purposes only. Estimated costs are not intended to represent preliminary eligible costs or final eligible costs of approved school facilities projects.

The Act (N.J.S.A. 18A:7G-7b) provides that all school facilities shall be deemed suitable for rehabilitation unless a pre-construction evaluation undertaken by the District demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that the structure might pose a risk to the safety of the occupants even after rehabilitation or that rehabilitation is not cost-effective. Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:26-2.3(b)(10), the Commissioner may identify school facilities for which new construction is proposed in lieu of rehabilitation for which it appears from the information presented that new construction is justified, provided, however, that for such school facilities so identified, the District must submit a feasibility study as part of the application for the specific school facilities project. The cost of each proposed building replacement is compared to the cost of additions or rehabilitation required to eliminate health and safety deficiencies and to achieve the District's programmatic model.

Facilities used for non-instructional or non-educational purposes are ineligible for State support under the Act. However, projects for such facilities shall be reviewed by the Department to determine whether they are consistent with the District's LRFP and whether the facility, if it is to house students (full or part time) conforms to educational adequacy requirements. These projects shall conform to all applicable statutes and regulations.

FINDINGS The Department has determined that the proposed work is adequate for review of the District's LRFP. However, Department approval of proposed work in the LRFP does not imply that the District may proceed with a school facilities project. The District must submit individual project applications with cost estimates for Department project approval. Both school facilities project approval and other capital project review require consistency with the District's approved LRFP.

6. Proposed Room Inventories and the Facilities Efficiency Standards

The Facilities Efficiency Standards (FES) are not applicable to vocational technical or special services schools. The Department will confirm that a proposed school facilities project conforms with the proposed room inventory represented in the LRFP when an application for a specific school facilities project is submitted to the Department for review and approval.