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Christie Administration Officials Joined By Elizabeth Students for “Topping Off” Ceremony For New Academic High School



ELIZABETH, NJ – New Jersey Schools Development Authority (SDA) CEO Charles McKenna joined Elizabeth students, school district officials and local officials for a beam signing and “topping off” ceremony to highlight the progress of construction for the new Academic High School.

The students, teachers and officials celebrated the ongoing construction of the new school by signing a steel beam, permanently making their mark on the new school. Immediately after, everyone present watched as the beam was then hoisted into place topping off and completing the steel erection of the new 183,000 square-foot facility.

“As I stand here with the steel structure of the future Academic High School in place behind us, I am excited to celebrate the progress of the school’s construction with Elizabeth students and community members,” said SDA CEO Charles B. McKenna. “Today’s event brings the community one step closer to another state-of-the-art facility where Elizabeth students will learn for generations to come.”

The new Academic High School is located in downtown Elizabeth across the street from City Hall. The new 183,000 square-foot, four-story school is designed to educate nearly 1,100 students in grades nine through twelve. The school will include general education classrooms, science labs, small group instruction classrooms, self-contained special education classrooms, an auditorium, cafeteria with a full service kitchen, a gymnasium, an auxiliary gymnasium and a media center.

“We are excited to see the construction progress for the Frank J. Cicarell Academic High School,” said Olga Hugelmeyer, Superintendent of Schools. “This building will house the Elizabeth High School which, once again this year, was recognized by U.S. News and World Report as one of the best high schools in the country. In our ongoing efforts to make the Elizabeth Public Schools one of the top

districts in the country, through the construction of this new building, we are providing for our students the necessary facilities to reach that goal.”

The first phase of work to prepare the project site for construction of the new high school was completed in July 2012. This phase included clearing the site, removal of sub-surface footings and foundations, remediation of areas of concern and importation of certified clean fill that was compacted and graded. In December 2012, SDA awarded a nearly \$43 million contract to Patoch Construction Company, Inc. for construction of the school. Patoch Construction Company, Inc. received a Notice to Proceed with the construction of the facility on May 31, 2013, after successfully completing the required constructability review. The Construction Manager is GREYHAWK, North America LLC and the architect is Skidmore, Owings & Merrill Architects. With the steel erection now complete, the contractor will now work to enclose the structure. The school is anticipated for occupancy in September 2016.

The SDA has invested more than \$375 million in completed projects in Elizabeth alone including 12 Capital projects and 29 health and safety/grant/emergent projects. The SDA’s current portfolio of active projects is valued at \$2 billion – including the Capital Project Portfolio (more than \$1.5 billion), emergent projects (\$100 million) and Regular Operating District grants (\$450 million state share).

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