



# New Jersey School Boards Association

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## NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **VOTERS APPROVE 36.8% OF SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION REQUESTS**

**TRENTON, December 14, 2005**—Voters on Tuesday displayed their uncertainty over state support for school construction projects, approving slightly more than a third of referendum requests on the ballot, the New Jersey School Boards Association reported today.

Waning voter support resulted in one of the lowest one-day approval rates since the state Legislature approved school construction funding under the Educational Facilities Construction and Financing Act of 2000 (EFCFA). Voters on Tuesday approved seven projects and defeated 12 others.

The small number of approvals in the December and September bond elections brought the success rate for the entire year to just under 59%—the lowest since 1997, when NJSBA began tracking bond referendums. (A nine-year overview of school construction proposals is at the end of this new release.)

Tuesday's 36.8% success rate presents sharp contrast to the 72% approval rate that schools have seen since 2000, when state grants began providing property tax relief for school-construction programs. Before EFCFA, 240 school districts received no state aid for school construction and another 108 received less than 25%.

EFCFA appropriated \$8.6 billion in school construction: \$6 billion to fund all the costs of school construction in the special needs, or Abbott, districts; and \$2.6 billion for up-front grants to fund a minimum of 40% of eligible school construction in all other districts. However, the grant funding available through the act has been fully allocated.

"Although the state funding has diminished, the need for modern, safe school facilities has not shrunk," said Edwina M. Lee, NJSBA executive director.

"'Bridge funding' is an essential first step," Lee continued. "It would ensure completion of projects now on hold in poor communities and provide grant funding to lessen the property tax burden of voter-approved school construction elsewhere. Clearly, bridge funding needs to be a top priority for the administration and Legislature during the post-election period."

Voters on Tuesday approved \$137 million in new construction. More than \$34 million of the approved construction would be eligible for state funds. Barring an influx of "bridge funding" to continue the grant program, the state's share of construction costs would need to be provided through annual debt service aid, which is authorized by the Legislature as part of the annual state budget.

State law limits school bond elections to five specific dates a year. The next school election will be January 24.

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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.

**New Jersey School Boards Association  
Annual Bond Referenda Survey  
Overview: 1997-2005**

	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997
# of Elections	89	71	93	102	67	89	89	75	74
# of Proposals Approved	52.5*	48	73	72	50.17*	68.66	63.5*	45	39
% of Proposals Approved	58.9%	67.6%	78.5%	70.5%	74.9%	77.2%	71.3%	60%	52.7%
Total Spending Proposed	\$1.858 billion	\$1.58 billion	\$1.69 billion	\$2.012 billion	\$1.274 billion	\$1.298 billion	\$1.199 billion	\$893.919 million	\$867.91 million
Total Spending Approved	\$1.083 billion	\$1.039 billion	\$1.42 billion	\$1.329 billion	\$970.1 million	\$1.043 billion	\$779.867 million	\$487.215 million	\$473.91 million
% Spending Approved	58.3%	65.7%	84%	66.1%	76.1 %	80.4%	65%	54.5%	54.6%

\* Fractions indicate split results in districts where referenda included more than one question.

**New Jersey School Construction Referendum Results  
Tuesday, December 13, 2005**

**STATEWIDE**

**Total amount approved: \$137,255,193** (\$353,921,452 proposed)  
**Amount eligible for state grant or debt service aid: \$34,724,174** (\$80,773,186 proposed)  
**Other sources (donations, transfers from capital reserve): \$350,000** (\$799,589 proposed)

**BERGEN COUNTY—Approved  
Englewood Cliffs**

Renovations and window replacement at Upper School and North Cliff School.

\$4,529,911 – total

\$1,759,928 – amount eligible for state grant or debt service aid

## **BURLINGTON COUNTY**

### **Chesterfield Township—Rejected**

Construct a new school and renovations to the Chesterfield Elementary School.

\$19,558,778 – total

\$3,595,532 – amount eligible for state grant or debt service aid

### **Hainesport Township—Rejected**

Addition to the Hainesport School; roof and drainage repair, and other renovations to existing facilities.

\$23,916,033 – total

\$6,047,430 – amount eligible for state grant or debt service aid

## **CUMBERLAND COUNTY**

### **Downe Township—Rejected**

Addition to Downe Township Elementary School

\$1,234,589 – total

\$440,320 – amount eligible for state grant or debt service aid

\$234,589 – transfer from capital reserve fund

## **ESSEX COUNTY**

### **Belleville—Rejected**

Construct a new school, including demolition of an existing school; additions and renovations at the high school; and replace ventilation systems at six schools.

\$55,776,244 – total

\$11,561,602 – amount eligible for state grant or debt service aid

### **Livingston—Approved**

Additions and renovations to Livingston High School.

\$51,521,069 – total

\$10,295,683 – amount eligible for state grant or debt service aid

### **Millburn Township—Rejected**

Additions and renovations to Millburn High School and Millburn Middle School.

\$40,271,000 – total

\$8,279,417 – amount eligible for state grant or debt service aid

## **GLOUCESTER COUNTY**

### **Swedesboro-Woolwich—Approved**

Construct a new elementary school.

\$31,875,000 – total

\$7,751,731 – amount eligible for state grant or debt service aid

## **MIDDLESEX COUNTY**

### **North Brunswick Township—Approved**

Completion of the North Brunswick Township High School project previously approved by voters on January 22, 2002.

\$7,391,802 – total

\$0 – amount eligible for state grant or debt service aid

## **MONMOUTH COUNTY**

### **Avon—Approved**

Addition and renovations to the Avon Elementary School, including safety, HVAC, electrical and plumbing repairs.

\$7,200,721 – total

\$1,956,600 – amount eligible for state grant or debt service aid

### **Freehold Borough—Rejected**

Construct a multi-purpose room and three classrooms; acquire administrative offices; and perform other school renovations.

\$7,797,911 – total

\$1,122,698 – amount eligible for state grant or debt service aid

### **Neptune City—Approved (both questions)**

Proposal #1

Construct a boiler room addition, and perform other renovations to Wilson Elementary School.

\$7,361,597 – total

\$2,704,596 – amount eligible for state grant or debt service aid  
\$350,000 – transfer from capital reserve

Proposal #2 (*contingent upon passage of Proposal #1*)  
Additions and renovations to Wilson Elementary School.  
\$2,760,946 – total  
\$489,977 – amount eligible for state grant or debt service aid

## **MORRIS COUNTY**

### **East Hanover Township—Rejected**

Complete the addition and renovations to the Frank J. Smith School, a project previously approved by voters in December 2002.  
\$2,000,000 – total  
\$0 – amount eligible for state grant or debt service aid

### **Kinnelon—Rejected (all questions)**

Proposal #1  
Addition and renovations to the Kinnelon High School.  
\$12,463,185 – total  
\$1,934,596 – amount eligible for state grant or debt service aid

Proposal #2 (*contingent upon passage of Proposal #1*)  
Reconstruct athletic field at Kinnelon High School, including artificial turf.  
\$906,250 – total  
\$102,688 – amount eligible for state grant or debt service aid  
\$215,000 – donation from Field of Dreams Committee

Proposal #3 (*contingent upon passage of Proposal #1*)  
Install air conditioning to third floor of Kinnelon High School.  
\$643,632 – total  
\$257,453 – amount eligible for state grant or debt service aid

## **SOMERSET COUNTY**

### **Franklin Township—Rejected**

Complete the new high school, including the athletic stadium and other renovations, previously approved by voters in May 2001.  
\$7,911,000 – total  
\$0 – amount eligible for state grant or debt service aid

## **SUSSEX COUNTY**

### **High Point Regional—Rejected (both questions)**

Proposal #1  
Additions and renovations at High Point Regional High School.  
\$9,508,890 – total  
\$2,974,018 – amount eligible for state grant or debt service aid

Proposal #2 (*contingent upon passage of Proposal #1*)  
Renovations to the high school auditorium and wood shop.  
\$730,968 – total  
\$272,608 – amount eligible for state grant or debt service aid

### **Sussex-Wantage—Rejected (both questions)**

Proposal #1  
Health and safety renovations to two elementary schools and the middle school.  
\$7,809,676 – total  
\$3,464,895 – amount eligible for state grant or debt service aid

Proposal #2 (*contingent upon passage of Proposal #1*)  
Renovations to three schools and additions to two schools.  
\$12,190,324 – total  
\$3,356,348 – amount eligible for state grant or debt service aid

### **Vernon Township—Rejected**

Renovations to three schools, including offices, classrooms, auditorium, athletic facilities and a pool.  
\$13,267,900 – total  
\$2,639,407 – amount eligible for state grant or debt service aid

**UNION COUNTY**

**Berkeley Heights—Proposal 1 Approved (Proposal 2 rejected)**

Proposal #1

Renovations to six schools.

\$24,614,147 – total

\$9,765,659 – amount eligible for state grant or debt service aid

Proposal #2 (*contingent upon passage of Proposal #1*)

Install field turf and construct tennis courts at the high school.

\$679,879 – total

\$0 – amount eligible for state grant or debt service aid