

Christie: Newark, Orange Schools Get Construction Priority

WEST NEW YORK : Gov. Christopher Christie, in a lunch-hour press conference here at Memorial High School Feb. 16, named two school building projects each in Orange and Newark are among 20 needs.

Christie added that Newark's two projects will be sharing \$675 million of state money with projects in Gloucester City, Keansburg, New Brunswick, Passaic, Phillipsburg and West New York. He and hosting West New York Mayor Felix Roque held their conference here at Memorial High School - which will also be replaced.

Christie's announcement comes as a relief to Orange Council President Tency Eason. Eason, who doubles the North Ward's Councilwoman, advocated the inclusion of Cleveland Street School before the SDA in Trenton last year. The SDA, which has the power to finance projects by issuing building bonds, had not been clear on which school projects would be tackled first.

Cleveland Street School, built in 1888, has had difficulty meeting scholastic needs. A basement room has doubled as its gym and cafeteria since the 1960s. Its breakfast and lunch service counters have to share half the basement's hall space.

OHS will be shedding the

four trailers that have fronted Lincoln Avenue since the 1990s. The city's fourth high school building replaced the now Orange Preparatory Academy structure, built in the 1920s, for \$6 million in 1973.

It is not known to "Local Talk" whether the OHS additions and renovations will include a separate auditorium. The current OHS was agreed to in 1968 on the provision that it uses the old high school's auditorium for graduations and assemblies.

Respective South Street and Elliott Street elementary school parents may also feel relief with Christie's commitment to their new buildings.