

# Cleveland backers press for funding

By Chris Sykes  
Staff Writer

A delegation from Orange was expected to travel to Trenton to express concern about the omission of the Cleveland Street School from a list of school construction projects that will receive state funding.

The group — including North Ward Councilwoman Tency Eason, Superintendent Ronald Lee and representatives of some of the district's parent-teacher organizations — was scheduled to attend Wednesday's meeting of the School Development Authority board. The authority is responsible for overseeing school construction projects in New Jersey.



Eason

The delegation that traveled to the scheduled 10 a.m. meeting included Lee, Eason and students and their parents. They were to use a school bus from the district to make the trip instead of chartering a private bus.

Eason, who also serves as vice president of Cleveland Street's PTA, said the group wanted to ask board members to reconsider its decision to put the school's redevelopment on hold. It is a project which has been discussed for nearly a decade.

While he lives close to the Lincoln Avenue School which, with the Park Avenue School, was renovated and expanded through state funds, city Democratic Committee member William Hathaway said he planned to attend. Hathaway said he became involved because he believed it would help the city.

"I think it's going to make a difference because of the participation of the kids, parents and other education advocates going down there to bring their case directly to the people who are making the decisions that are affecting their lives."

On Feb. 15, Gov. Chris Christie announced the results of a "comprehensive review" that resulted in the recommendation to advance 10 projects totaling \$584 million. The sites are in Bridgeton, Elizabeth, Long Branch, New Brunswick, Newark and West New York, as well as two each in Paterson and Jersey City.

Christie said the selection of the 10 projects was part of his administration's "complete revamping" of the Schools Development Authority construction program. The governor added it was the "first-ever" statewide prioritization of SDA school-construction projects that he said was designed to bring "accountability to the spending of hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars annually."

Assemblywoman Mila Jasey, a former member of the South Orange-Maplewood Board of Education, questioned the criteria that was used to select construction projects. Slowly, other legislators, including Republicans in Christie's party, have come to express reservations on the schools selected for renovation.

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