



Education Law Center

60 Park Place, Suite 300
Newark, New Jersey 07102
(973) 624-1815
TTY (973) 624-4618
Fax (973) 624-7339
<http://www.edlawcenter.org>

Examples of Problems Reported to ELC Caused by Inspector General's Stop Work Directive in Abbott Districts

Union City

The District was anticipating a turf field installation on district-owned property next to the Jose Marti School to be completed by Aug. 30th, in time for the 2005-2006 school year. Last week, district was informed by SCC the no bids would be accepted until further notice. This will effectively eliminate the district's athletic events and physical education classes for several elementary schools, and both high schools.

The NJ SCC held a pre-bid meeting on March 18th. Bids were scheduled to be returned last week, March 31st, by 2PM. The Notice to Proceed (NTP) was scheduled to be awarded within fourteen (14) days of the Notice of Award. Substantial completion was Aug. 22nd, and final completion Aug. 30th. This was a very aggressive construction schedule; but had to be met due to the fact the district does not have any other fields available for sports programs and physical ed classes.

The Roosevelt Stadium athletic field has been utilized by both high schools and several elementary schools. The Stadium has been turned over to the general contractor, and plans are underway to demolish the site and field and construct a new high school and athletic field.

Nearly 1,300 students would be scheduled to use the field at the new site for physical ed, health/science, DARE and driver ed instruction at the site because their existing school sites can not provide the teaching stations or support spaces to fulfill the CCCS. The site will be utilized for fifty (50) periods per week, in addition to those periods scheduled for the Jose Marti School

Without the construction of the new athletic field, many league sanctioned competitive sports programs will have to be eliminated. Football, soccer, and softball programs will feel the full negative affects of not having a field to play their regularly scheduled league games. This will also impact athletic programs in the other districts.

Newark

The new Central High School has been under construction. Work has stopped because the subcontractors walked off the job because they have not been paid since January. The

money is not flowing because the Inspector General has held up all invoices. Not only does this scenario have huge consequences for construction firms, it means layoffs of workers.

The work stoppage also has major consequences for this district. The old Central High School building was scheduled to be swing space for the Westside High School students until that school is completed. Work on the new Central High School was due to be completed by early 2006. This will delay the project and the district will not be able to move the Westside High School students into the building until Summer 2007 because it is not possible to move a high school in the middle of a school year. Thus, this delay causes a domino effect and delays other projects.

In addition, a 30 ft section of brick fell off George Washington Carver School on January 11th. The district took steps to stabilize the situation, erected sidewalk bridges, had the County Superintendent declare an emergency and referred the matter to SCC. Repairs are expected to cost \$1-3 million depending on the condition of other areas of brick that did not collapse. (Abbott districts are not allowed to keep money in their budgets to cover such emergencies because all work of this type must be done by SCC.)

SCC reportedly investigated but took no action. Now because of the Inspector General's investigation, they cannot enter into any new contracts including emergency situations.

Irvington

Students from the Augusta School are presently housed in a leased Catholic school. An addition to the Augusta School was torn down due to asbestos. The school was scheduled to have a new addition and total renovation completed by September, a very tight timeline. The bid for construction was due on the date that the State stopped the awarding of all contracts. The district has been told that the bids have been extended for a few weeks (no definite timeline was given). The completion of the project will now be delayed which translates into an additional year of renting swing space as the district moves students around the district to complete buildings. SCC pays \$399,996 per year to rent the Catholic school and the district pays approximately \$200,000 per year for additional transportation.

Another District (name withheld for security reasons)

Nine elementary schools in one Abbott district have no security systems. These schools are located in a very high security risk area. Installation was scheduled for this summer but the contracts are in limbo. District administrators consider this an emergency situation and have been appealing to the State to help resolve this problem.

Long Branch

A contract was awarded for the new Gregory school several months ago, but the Notice to Proceed was delayed. Now the process has stopped completely even though the construction company was ready to start in February. The city has donated the property and is completing the environmental work and moving a gas line. The district is anxiously waiting for construction to begin because the goal was to have the school completed by June 2006 in order to move students into the building to start other work in other buildings. The district is experiencing overcrowding and every month delay causes further problems.

Gloucester City

SCC has purchased land and 70 houses for a new middle school. The attached houses are now boarded up. The contract for demolition of these homes can be issued at this time. The fire commissioner is concerned that these boarded up houses present a significant fire hazard because of the area where they are located. The area is littered and the grass will soon be overgrown.

This district is suffering a series of inconveniences due to the inability of SCC to award contracts. The high school is under renovation and the 7th and 8th grades are due to move out of the high school to the new middle school. But with the delay in the awarding contracts, the process is no longer on track. In addition, fields are torn up and the district is paying to rent fields for some sports and paying for busing. The district also spent money to move computers to the elementary school in order to house the high school summer school. This would have allowed the construction firm to work two shifts in the summer. Now those plans have been scrapped.

Camden

The façade is falling off the Camden High School. The area is presently fenced off but potentially dangerous. This is an emergency project scheduled to be done this summer. SCC put the project out to bid, but it is now on hold.