New Jersey public schools are among the very best in the country. We have a long-standing commitment to equity and opportunity.

But the Christie Administration’s utter failure to address the deplorable conditions in too many public schools is a direct affront to those core New Jersey values. And in nearly every case, the schools that have been neglected are in New Jersey’s urban communities.
Under this administration, repairs, renovations and construction in decaying and dangerous schools in 31 designated high-priority districts have ground to a halt. Our children are left struggling to learn in conditions that are not just deplorable, but truly immoral.

Students should not be asked to learn in damp, drafty, rodent-infested rooms. They should be able to get a drink without wondering if the pipes are delivering tainted water. They should not sit next to crumbling, mold-infested walls as they eat lunch. When students are so accustomed to rain-flooded floors that they nickname a hallway “the waterfall,” adults have failed them.

And the adults who have failed New Jersey’s children are the Governor and his appointees at the Schools Development Authority.
They have offered endless delays, excuses and blame. But our children deserve action and solutions.

No amount of routine maintenance can compensate for this structural neglect. And SDA districts are not allowed, under the law, to budget for or independently undertake the costly repairs required in these schools.

There can be no other conclusion: this administration is insincere in its oft-proclaimed commitment to children and is discriminatory in the treatment of the SDA districts. 95% of priority schools (ones being given 2 years to improve or face closure) are in the 31 SDA districts – the very districts being refused funding to repair or replace their dangerous facilities. It is the height of hypocrisy to so callously neglect the basic need of students for functional school facilities, then threaten to close down their schools if they do not improve their performance.

The time for excuses is long gone. It is time to take action so that no New Jersey student is abandoned to a dangerous, unhealthy school building.
The undeveloped site of the urgently needed Gloucester City Elementary School. Students are currently attending school in a previously condemned building.

31 long-term use trailers at Phillipsburg High School. The new high school is yet to be built. Construction of the new high school was approved only after a court decision.

Main entrance, Trenton Central High School.

Teacher bathroom, Elementary School No. 20, Paterson.

Food preparation room, Elementary School No. 20, Paterson.

Classroom used by students, Trenton Central High School.

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