

**STATE SUPERINTENDENT MARK JOHNSON
ANNOUNCES \$30 MILLION IN GRANTS TO FOUR COUNTIES
THROUGH THE NEEDS-BASED PUBLIC SCHOOL CAPITAL FUND**

North Carolina Superintendent Mark Johnson has announced that \$30 million in grant funds from the new Needs-Based Public School Capital Fund will be awarded to Camden, Clay, Gates and Jones counties. The grant awards will allow for construction of new school buildings in these economically distressed counties. “Through these grants, we will begin to address the critical school infrastructure needs in less populated parts of our state through projects that will begin construction within 12 months,” said Mark Johnson, state superintendent. “Students in outdated – and in some cases, unsafe – buildings will benefit soon from these new facilities.”

- **Camden County:** \$2.29 million for initial costs for a new high school to replace a structurally inadequate facility serving a third of all students in the county (\$33.3 million total project cost)
- **Clay County:** \$10.2 million for a new primary-school facility (pre-K through second grade), enabling the district to reorganize grade levels to place all pre-K through eighth grade students in age-appropriate educational settings (\$14 million total project cost)
- **Gates County:** \$2.5 million to replace a structurally inadequate middle school wing (\$10.6 million total project cost)
- **Jones County:** \$15 million for a new pre-K through 12th grade campus to serve 60 percent of students in the district (\$45 million total project cost)

The fund — more than \$100 million over the next two years — was provided by the General Assembly to assist lower-wealth counties with their critical public school building capital needs. For this year and next year, funding will be available only to Tier 1 counties. In later years, Tier 2 counties will be eligible.

Funds, appropriated by the General Assembly through revenue from the state lottery, are capped at \$15 million per project in Tier 1 counties. The law requires a local match of \$1 for every \$3 in grant funds.

County applications were reviewed based on priorities provided in the law, including ability to generate revenue, high debt-to-tax revenue ratio, and the extent to which a project will address critical deficiencies in adequately serving the current and future student population.

An emphasis was placed on projects that were far enough along in the planning process that construction could begin within 12 months. Counties that were not funded will be eligible to apply for grants in fiscal year 2018-2019, when the available funding will total \$75 million.

“As I travel across the state, I see the great need, and I understand the local struggle to fund these large capital projects,” Johnson said. “I thank the General Assembly for addressing this need with a focus on equity and look forward to many more of these projects being funded next year.”

LOCAL QUOTES FOLLOW

CAMDEN COUNTY

“This funding will allow us to take the next important steps in the process of getting our capital project underway, and we are very excited about that,” said Joe Ferrell,

superintendent of Camden County Schools. “On behalf of the Board of Education and all our students, employees and families, I am certainly grateful for the grant.”

CLAY COUNTY

“The Clay County Board of Education and the Clay County Commissioners are thrilled to be the recipient of this grant,” said Clay County Manager Mark Pullium. “This grant will provide the majority of funds needed to construct an educationally appropriate, 21st century learning facility for the pre-K through second grade. Once constructed, the new facility will greatly enhance student outcomes and development for currently enrolled students as well as future students. Clay County is thankful that our 2017 General Assembly had a vision of providing better school facilities throughout our great state and took action by creating this program.”

GATES COUNTY

“I am very excited for Gates County Schools to have been chosen as the recipient of this grant from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction,” said Barry Williams, superintendent of Gates County Public Schools. “Applying for this grant is an example of how dedicated we are making sure we fully meet the needs of our students. The Gates County school board and county commissioners are committed to ensuring our students are provided safe, healthy and well-maintained schools where quality instruction can be delivered and all students can be successful. This grant program will help our community meet the critical needs of our school facilities.”

JONES COUNTY

“We are grateful for the grant approval,” said Michael Bracy, superintendent of Jones County Public Schools. “This will help our plans for a new school become a reality. This opportunity will be a game changer for our community and most importantly, our students.”