



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeremy Cooney

## Rochester School Modernization Bill Signed Into Law

JEREMY COONEY November 19, 2021

| ISSUE: **NYS SENATOR JEREMY COONEY, ROCHESTER, EDUCATION, UNION WORKERS, RCSD**



**(Rochester, NY)** - Today, local leaders celebrated the Governor's signing of the Rochester School Modernization Program (RSMP) legislation into law. The RSMP passed both the Assembly and Senate during the 2021 legislative session, with sponsorship from Assemblymember Harry Bronson and Senator Jeremy Cooney. The RSMP will be one of the largest public works and jobs projects in Rochester's history. It represents nearly a half-a-billion-dollar investment of new state funds to update and modernize academic facilities in the Rochester City School District.

**Senator Jeremy Cooney:**

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*Zip code shouldn't determine whether a child gets access to a quality education. The RSMP will ensure students in the city are learning in safe, modern, well-equipped schools and be a significant driver of local employment. I am proud to sponsor this legislation and grateful to my colleagues and Governor Hochul for their support of this third and final phase of the program."*

**Assemblymember Harry Bronson:**

"I want to extend a huge thank you to Superintendent Lesli Myers-Small and her entire team for their efforts on this legislation. I also want to thank and acknowledge Governor Hochul and the team at the Education Department for making this a reality. It has long been recognized that a healthy and welcoming learning environment promotes greater educational success. All our students must have safe and accessible places to learn, play, and succeed while at school. This historic infrastructure investment puts our children, families, and teachers first. Because our Rochester students deserve nothing less, I am incredibly proud that together with Senator Cooney and my delegation colleagues, we were able to deliver for the students and families of Rochester and Monroe County. We will also provide many hard-working women and men with good paying jobs that were created with these construction projects. Together, we made this happen. Today, the Phase 3 project can get started without delay."

**Mayor Lovely Warren:**

"I know Assemblyman David Gantt is smiling down on our children today, knowing the investment he secured on their behalf more than a decade ago is coming closer to completion. I am grateful to our legislative team in Albany for keeping these investments on

track and to the members of the Joint Schools Construction Board for their work to ensure these funds are spent in a manner that makes it possible to turn every Rochester school into a Community Beacon School, and that the jobs created with these funds benefit women and minority citizens of Rochester.”

**Mayor-Elect Malik Evans:**

"I want to thank Assemblymember Bronson and Senator Cooney for their efforts to secure passage of the Rochester School Modernization Program legislation. I am grateful that Governor Kathy Hochul signed this vital legislation to ensure Rochester's children have access to high-quality facilities and spur economic development in our city. The passage of this legislation shows that when we all collaborate, our community wins."

**Dr. Lesli Myers-Small Superintendent of RCSD:**

“We are grateful to Governor Hochul and our local State Delegation Leaders for their roles in ensuring we have the opportunity to provide state-of-the-art learning spaces for students, teachers, and families. We know from the first two phases of the Rochester Schools Modernization Program that the transformation inside these schools make our classrooms and schools dynamic workspaces for all who use them. The designs and technological advances made and through this program will bring the District’s learning environments into the 21st century.”

**Norman Jones, Board Chair of the RSMP:**

“With the passage of this legislation, Rochester is firmly on track to bring every City School into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and provide our children with the educational facilities they deserve. I want to thank my colleagues on the JSCB for their commitment to this project and our legislative delegation in Albany for their powerful advocacy to secure this funding.”

**Van White, Board of Education President:**

"While some have accurately described this as "the final phase of the RSMP", we, the members of the RSCD Board of Education, have always looked at each phase of the RSMP, as the beginning. Just as with the previous phases of the RSMP, when these school buildings reopen, countless students will begin an exciting new phase of their education because this phase, like the previous phases, will provide our students with access to safer, effective, and more efficient learning environments. We thank Governor Hochul and our amazing leaders in the Senate and Assembly for their vision and diligence in the passage of this final phase of RSMP. But again, for our children this "final" phase is actually just the beginning. THANK YOU!"

**Grant Malone, President of the Rochester Building and Trades Council:**

"The RCSD modernization legislation that just was signed this week by Governor Hochul is some of the best news for the Rochester City School District we have had in years! This funding will allow us to complete the updates needed to ensure our younger generations can obtain a High School Education that's prepares them for adult life. This project will provide hundreds of good paying construction jobs for the local construction worker and their families. I want to thank Senator Cooney and Assemblymember Bronson for their leadership and support on this important issue.

**Aaron Hilger, ROBEX:**

Phase III of the Schools Modernization Program is an important opportunity for our community to help City of Rochester Students. All children deserve a great learning environment - one that has the right types of classrooms, learning spaces and technology for success. In addition to creating a better learning environment, this program will provide thousands of jobs for construction workers over a period of several years. Sustained

programs like this present opportunities for city residents to work in the industry and establish great construction careers with some of the best firms in the industry.”

**Joseph Leone, Executive Director UNiCON Rochester:**

“I want to thank Assemblymember Bronson, Senator Cooney and all those who have played a role in moving these critical projects forward. Phase III of the Rochester City School Modernization Program is the next, best step in our journey to ensure our city school children have the safe and proper educational spaces they need to learn and thrive. These long-awaited projects will also act as an economic engine providing our local construction workforce the opportunity grow apprenticeships, feed their families, and put their skills to work. From safeguarding the building infrastructure to updating the HVAC systems, these buildings are in significant need of these improvements, and our local engineering and construction workforce is ready with the skills and resources needed to put this funding to good use! On behalf of the Rochester Building and Construction Trades industry we are thankful for your efforts in moving Phase III forward as we look towards advancing our community and providing our children the learning environment they deserve.”

**Senator Samra Brouk:**

“Our young people deserve educational facilities that meet the needs of the 21st century, and there must be parity in the resources offered to both city and suburban students. This project will not only reinvent how learning happens in the City of Rochester but will create opportunities for good paying local jobs. I am proud of the work that our Rochester delegation has been able to deliver to our city, and I look forward to new opportunities to invest in our community’s students.”

**Assemblymember Jen Lunsford:**

"This bill would bring essential funding to our city school district to ensure we were creating an environment where our scholars grow and thrive, it brings good paying union jobs to the city to help these same scholars find careers that will pay dividends into the future. I'm proud to stand with my colleagues in support of this bill."

**Assemblymember Demond Meeks:**

"Our children deserve an environment that inspires growth and promotes success. The current conditions of many of our schools are unsuitable for an adequate learning environment. Addressing these issues requires effective leadership and a lasting commitment to the youth of our community. The first two phases of the Rochester Schools Modernization Program demonstrated the significant academic impact that modern, comfortable, and safe conditions have on students and faculty. Revitalizations will continue to be carried out by local construction firms that will support workers from our community. Our children can only succeed if we match expectations with investments. I'm thankful to Senator Cooney, Assemblymember Bronson, Governor Hochul, and our democratic legislature for bringing this bill to fruition. As a delegation, we will continue working together towards achieving great things for Greater Rochester."

The Phase 3 portion of the project will allow the District to further attend to its substantial facility needs. This law offers significant improvements over the previous construction authorization language. Phase 3 legislation strengthens accountability measures and oversight by the State Education Department to ensure that the projects are completed on time and within budget. It also ensures that the local share is within the fiscal realities of the district. At all points in this process, the families of Rochester need to know that this financial investment is being done properly and that the goals of the project will be completed in a timely manner and benefit our children's education.