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News Release

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D.C. Schools facilities ready for new school year

Baltimore – Officials with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers report that all of the 147 District of Columbia public schools opened the new school year Sept. 4 on time as scheduled. This marks the fourth successful school year opening in a row.

For the past four years, a partnership between DCPS and the Army Corps of Engineers has resulted in an effort to upgrade and modernize school facilities. So far this year, nearly 1,000 improvement projects have been completed involving every school. Among these were needed structural repairs at 35 schools, installation of new roofs and windows at 63 schools, replacement of old and failing heating systems at 38 schools, more than 700 asbestos abatement actions of various sizes and several other environmental projects.

“Over the past four years, DCPS, the school community, the contracting community and the Corps continue to make tremendous headway toward improving school facilities,” said Col. Charles J. Fiala, Jr., commander of the Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District. “Together, we are transforming the schools by creating safer and healthier classrooms for the children of the District of Columbia.”

DCPS, Corps of Engineers and private contracting firms are working on a number of ongoing projects that include the designs for air conditioning replacements, bathroom renovations, American with Disabilities Act projects, flooring upgrades and interior renovation projects.

Beyond these extensive repairs and upgrades, officials report that efforts are under way for major whole-school modernizations, which involve a long-term overhaul of the entire school facilities inventory. In the immediate future, officials point to the design and construction for total modernization of 19 existing schools. Construction has begun at five of these schools, with four more scheduled to begin the construction phase this fall. Others are currently under design.

In other work, the Corps is continuing to assist DCPS with the internal reorganization of their facilities management office. This reorganization will help DCPS to develop the in-house capability to manage the existing schools and the massive capital improvements program, which will continue for many years.

- 30 -

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