
Our Children/Our Schools

A Statewide Education Justice Campaign

THE SCHOOL FUNDING REFORM ACT OF 2008 (SFRA)

What Is It?

- The SFRA is a new law passed by the NJ Legislature in early January 2008 by the slimmest of margins. It determines how much State aid school districts will receive and how that will be calculated.
- The SFRA ends the Abbott designation created by the NJ Supreme Court in a series of historic decisions (see other side).
- The SFRA limits the amount of money NJ school districts can spend on their students – in most cases this number is below (sometimes well below!) what many districts spent in 2007-8.

What's Wrong With It?

The SFRA has *many* flaws. Here are just a few:

- Abbott districts will no longer receive the same level of per-pupil funding as successful suburban districts.
- The new, average, per-pupil cost for Abbott districts is almost \$3,000 less than in the 2007-8 school year.
- Abbott districts will no longer be entitled to needs-based supplemental funding.
- The accountability process built into Abbott, which requires that money be spent on proven academic programs, is missing from the SFRA.
- The level of State aid directed to many Abbott and other districts won't be enough to cover rising fixed costs or ease pressure on local property tax payers.
- The successful Abbott preschool program is in jeopardy, so is adequate special education funding.
- School districts will be forced to make cuts in academic year 2008-9, and BIGGER cuts in the following year and beyond.

What Can Be Done About It?

The NJ Supreme Court must decide if the SFRA provides fair funding for NJ's urban children. Tell the Court and our legislators **NOT** to turn back the clock on school funding!

JOIN parents, students, education activists and child advocates at the Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex in Trenton, on Monday, September 22, at 9 a.m. for a RALLY and PRESS CONFERENCE in support of Abbott and equitable education funding. For more information, contact info@ourchildrenourschools.org.

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ABBOTT V. BURKE BACK IN THE NJ SUPREME COURT ON SEPTEMBER 22, 2008

What Is Abbott?

In 1990, the NJ Supreme Court decided that the education provided to NJ's urban school children was inadequate and unconstitutional. In later rulings, the Court ordered specific **remedies** – adequate funding, supplemental programs, preschool, school facilities improvements and accountability measures – to correct this situation. Because the title of the case was "**Abbott v. Burke**," NJ's poor, urban school districts came to be known as **Abbotts**.

There are currently **31 Abbott districts**. The Abbott remedies, in place now for almost a decade, have resulted in **significant gains**, including over 40,000 children in preschool, new and renovated school facilities, and reduced achievement gaps. But there is much that still needs to be done to provide an adequate and equitable education to the more than **300,000** children in Abbott districts.

What's Happening in Court on September 22?

With passage of the **SFRA** (see other side), the State has attempted to wipe out the **landmark Abbott mandates**. On September 22, the **NJ Supreme Court** will hear attorneys from the State and from Education Law Center argue about the **constitutionality** of the SFRA and the **future of Abbott**.

While the Court won't come to a decision on September 22, the fate of NJ's children and their education will again be in their hands. **They need to hear from us!**

Is There Something We Can Do On September 22?

YES! JOIN parents, students, education activists and child advocates at the Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex in Trenton, on Monday, **September 22**, at **9 a.m.** for a **RALLY** and **PRESS CONFERENCE** in support of *Abbott* and equitable education funding. For more information, **contact:**
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