



NJDOE News

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State Board of Education Adopts Revised Regulations for Urban Education Reform, With Emphasis on Greater Local Input in Curriculum and Budget at School Level

The State Board of Education today adopted and updated regulations governing the programs and procedures for implementing urban education reform initiatives in the 30 special needs districts, known as the Abbott districts.

The regulations, which were amended based on testimony at public hearings and extensive written comments, implement a reform effort that is the first of its kind in the nation.

Children in the 30 Abbott districts will receive the educational, health and social services they need to achieve the Core Curriculum Content Standards.

"The changes I incorporated in the regulations are a direct result of the testimony provided during numerous public hearings," said Commissioner of Education David Hespe. "The new rules will have a positive impact on the children in the Abbott districts by bringing more resources and oversight to bear on their needs. At the same time, we believe the success of all our efforts is strongly linked to significantly increasing parental and community involvement in their education."

The sweeping reforms begin with children as young as three and four-years-old, with Abbott districts required to provide full-day full-year early childhood education programs by September 2001. Hespe stressed that these programs for pre-schoolers will allow for the early detection of learning needs, thereby giving children access to intervention programs that are age and developmentally appropriate.

The revised regulations expand the requirement for adoption of a Whole School Reform (WSR) model to include all secondary schools in the Abbott districts. In addition, all elementary and secondary schools are required to align the instructional materials and processes in their WSR programs with the Core Curriculum Content Standards.

Hespe said the broader span of the revised regulations from pre-school through high school - is a direct response to the public's call for a comprehensive strategy for helping the children in the 30 Abbott districts.

"The Chief School Administrator in each Abbott district will be responsible for the establishment of a School Management Team (SMT) in each school, with membership drawn from parents, teachers and community members," said Hespe. "The SMT will be directly involved in the development of curriculum, the review of statewide assessments, the development of technology plans and the implementation of co-curricular and extra curricular programs.

"This involvement of SMTs at each school will greatly increase the participation of parents in the education of their children, of teachers in the education of their students, and of community members in the education of the citizens of the future," added Hespe.

The heightened involvement and oversight at the local level is also evidenced in the new rules governing school-based budgeting, which will allow teachers, parents and community members to provide input on the funding of education at the school level.

"The opportunity to be directly involved in the development of the school-level budget will put parents, teachers and community members in a position where they can now have a major impact on ensuring that the students of the community receive a quality education," said Hespe.

The regulations prescribe zero-based budgeting at the school level and also at the district level to root out inefficiencies and redirect money to more effective programs.

"The purpose of the new regulations governing zero-based budgeting at the school level, as well as those for the design of long-range facilities plans, is to make sure that spending priorities are carefully scrutinized by all stakeholders," said Hespe.

Hespe said the extensive revision of the regulations signaled his determination to have all these "stakeholders" -

government, school administrators, teachers, parents and community members share accountability for making sure that the children in the 30 Abbott school districts receive a quality education.

"The public hearings on these sweeping regulations produced a consensus that we can produce a public education system which leaves no one behind," said Hesper. "This ambitious undertaking has taken a momentous step forward today, and everyone should feel energized to continue our progress in ensuring student achievement throughout New Jersey."

(NOTE: [Attached are the adopted regulations](#) and executive summary. These documents are also posted on the department's web site, www.state.nj.us/education.)