



NJDOE News

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[Number of Schools in New Jersey's Abbott Districts Adopting Whole School Reform Jumps to 370 for 2000-01 School Year](#)

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Commissioner of Education David Hespe today announced that 174 elementary and secondary schools in Abbott districts have had their plans approved to implement whole school reform in the 2000-01 school year. This brings to 370 the number of Abbott district schools implementing whole school reform.

In the previous two school years (1998-99 and 1999-2000), 196 Abbott schools had selected whole school reform models.

Whole School Reform (WSR) is being implemented in all Abbott district elementary and secondary schools. This is the third cohort under the NJ Supreme Court's Abbott ruling, which directed that all elementary schools in the 30 Abbott districts choose a whole school reform model by June, 2000. Currently, 306 Abbott elementary schools have finalized their selections of a whole school reform model, and the eight elementary schools that have not completed the process are expected to make decisions soon.

The State Department of Education is requiring all Abbott secondary schools to adopt whole school reform by January 2001. Education officials reported that 64 of the 120 secondary schools are ahead of schedule and have already adopted their reform model. When the final cohort is approved early next year, a total of 434 elementary and secondary schools in the Abbott districts will have selected a whole school reform model.

"This has been a tremendous undertaking that involved extraordinary efforts and resources at the state and local level," Commissioner Hespe said. "Some critics questioned whether this ambitious plan could be achieved by New Jersey, but today is proof that we are successfully implementing the largest school reform effort of its kind in the nation.

"Now comes the exciting part," added Hespe, "as our schools turn from planning reform to putting in place the new programs and practices that will help our most disadvantaged children succeed in school."

Whole school reform is a complete restructuring of an entire school, incorporating a wide range of programs and strategies that have been used successfully to improve schools by strengthening curriculum and ensuring resources are targeted to the needs of students. These schools feature smaller class sizes, intensive instruction in all subject areas (particularly reading), tutoring services, school level management by a team, and a school-based budget.

Whole school reform requires effective leadership by the principal with the support and participation of the faculty of each school. Therefore, the selection of a particular educational reform model must be made voluntarily by the principal and faculty of the school. The school management team then oversees implementation of the model.

"All of the Abbott district schools have worked closely with the Department of Education and the developers of each whole school reform model," said Barbara Anderson, assistant commissioner for the Division of Student Services. "The department has held numerous technical assistance sessions for school officials, providing opportunities for school personnel to consult directly with the developers of the models for Whole School Reform."

Commissioner Hespe congratulated the schools on their selections and pledged the Department of Education's assistance as they implement their chosen programs.

Schools that selected the state's preferred Whole School Reform model, **Success for All/Roots & Wings**, will receive \$70,000 grants from the state to support implementation, while schools adopting other reform models will be eligible for grants of up to \$45,000. The department noted that six elementary schools are implementing their own alternative design reform models.

Eligible schools are also being encouraged to apply for competitive Federal grant funds through the

Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) program.

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