

**NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION**

**Improving Standards-Driven Instruction and Literacy and Increasing Efficiency in Abbott**

**School Districts**

**Special Adopted Rules: N.J.A.C. 6A:10A**

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### **6A:10A-3.2 Secondary Education Initiatives**

(a) The Department shall continue to provide professional development and other assistance to school districts and schools to implement the secondary education program specified in this section.

(b) Abbott school districts shall plan for the creation of smaller and more personalized learning environments for students in grades six through 12. The goal of this work is to implement the standards and practices that are incorporated herein by reference as Appendix B to this chapter leading to the implementation of small learning communities or small schools in the 2008-2009 academic year. The 2007-2008 academic year shall be a planning year for all Abbott school districts.

(c) The school district central office shall assist schools to plan and implement the secondary education rules by providing professional development and assistance in each planning year and after implementation. The district central office shall:

1. Incorporate relevant research about effective practices pertaining to curriculum, instruction and the use of evidence of student performance and student development in secondary education in supporting administrators, teachers and other staff who serve students in grades six through 12;
2. Develop and implement a school district curriculum for grades six through 12 that gives first priority to language arts literacy, mathematics and science, is fully aligned to the CCCS, and exposes all students to instruction of sufficient academic rigor to master the CCCS, and is consistent with the preschool through grade five curriculum;

3. Develop with faculty and staff of school district interim and end-of-course assessments in language arts literacy, math, and science;
4. Disseminate student achievement data on interim and end-of-course assessments, assist staff with the analysis of these interim and end-of-course assessments and indicate what adjustments in instructions are necessary;
5. Communicate regularly and in a variety of forms with parents and the community regarding the academic expectations for students and to provide suggestions on how they can assist students outside the classroom;
6. Work with the Department to develop indicators and benchmarks for evaluating the implementation of the standards and practices for secondary education and for measuring student achievement. These measures shall be reported at multiple levels (small learning community, school, and school district) and shall include such items as:
  - i. Student and teacher attendance rates;
  - ii. The number and percentage of ninth graders completing Algebra I successfully;
  - iii. Instructional time/days missed due to in-school and out-of-school suspensions and other disciplinary infractions;
  - iv. Grades and completion rates for all courses required to be completed for graduation;
  - v. Performance of students on State assessments;
  - vi. Persistence of students from grade level to grade level and to graduation from high school; and

vii. Enrollment in, persistence with, and completion of postsecondary education; and

7. Submit to the Department by March 1, 2008, a study of all students who graduated by Special Review Assessment (SRA) in the school year ended June 30, 2007. The study shall include a review of the courses taken in grades nine through 12, with the grades achieved, and the attendance record for each year. There shall be a determination of the proportion of SRA graduates who satisfactorily completed the courses required for graduation and their scores on the HSPA tests in each discipline and for each time the test was taken.

(d) Planning team established in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:10A-5.3 shall develop a plan, in conjunction with the local professional development committee, for secondary education reform commensurate with rules set forth in this chapter, and incorporate this plan into State and Federal compliance documents, and the school district two-year report on instructional priorities. The plan shall address the Abbott secondary education regulations set forth in this section which include:

1. Implementation of small organizational structures as set forth in (b) above.
2. Greater personalization for all secondary students so that during the 2008-2009 academic year, schools are organized to implement the standards for personalization as set forth in chapter Appendix B, unless the school district can demonstrate that the goals are being achieved by alternative means.
3. A preschool through 12 curriculum that is fully aligned to the CCCS to prepare all students in grades six through eight for college preparatory coursework in high school and all students in

grades nine through 12 for collegiate instruction after graduation, including college level preparatory English, Algebra I and Lab Biology. All courses prescribed by the curriculum shall be identified by January 2008 and implemented by September 2008. All students who enter secondary schools after this date shall take a course of study that, however organized, prepares them for college-level work. All courses required for graduation shall:

i. Be developed, reviewed, evaluated and revised by a broad cross-section of teachers, content supervisors and principals;

ii. Satisfy the CCCS and indicators in each content area;

iii. State clearly the purpose of instruction including the essential content to be mastered in each course with interim benchmarks and assessments and final assessments; and

iv. Organize instruction by themes, including projects that involve more than one discipline, integrate career interests, and with other suggested activities intended to increase engagement.

4. Instruction that engages students to produce high quality work. School districts shall survey student engagement and learning, and assess teachers' abilities to teach the content of the CCCS as follows:

i. Apply teaching strategies to accommodate individual learning styles and interests;

ii. Assign only student work that requires grade-level or higher performance from all students or provide recommendations for students performing below grade level;

iii. Engage all students with independent and group learning projects across disciplines;

iv. Assist students who are struggling and challenge students who have attained proficiency to deepen and broaden their learning;

v. Offer all honors, advanced level courses, and Advanced Placement (AP) courses to all students who satisfy the pre-requisites. Courses pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)1ii may be offered with the approval of the school principal and superintendent of schools. A variety of electives shall be available; and

vi. Offer collaborative professional development to increase collegiality, a culture of inquiry and the analysis of student work to improve teaching and learning and to meet the goals of school district and individual professional improvement plans to include:

(1) Teacher and administrator Professional Growth Plans for School Leaders that incorporate the professional development essential to improve implementation of these regulations; and

(2) Evaluation of secondary principals for implementing the standards and practices in these regulations.

(e) The planning team in (d) above shall be appointed by the superintendent to be representative of principals, content supervisors, teachers, school counselors, parents, the community and the district board of education.

(f) The Secondary Education Advisory Committee established in 2004-2005 shall continue to function, advising the Department on the implementation of the secondary education initiative and promoting the initiative statewide.

## **Appendix B**

### **Secondary Education Standards**

These standards will be implemented in grades six through 12 during the 2008-09 academic year.

The standards reflect the recommendations of the Secondary Education Workgroup established by *Abbott X*.

#### **Small Organizational Structures**

1. Small organizational structures facilitate a greater personalization and improve instruction for all secondary students in the school district.
2. Small organizational structures may include small learning communities and/or small schools in free-standing facilities or within larger facilities, with 300 to 400 or fewer students recommended for small learning communities within existing high schools and 250 to 300 or fewer students recommended for small learning communities within schools with grades six through eight.
3. To the maximum extent possible, small learning communities and small schools are organized around academic and/or career themes (e.g. performing arts, math and science, world languages, law and government, aeronautics, health sciences).
4. Middle and high school students' and teachers' preferences guide the formation of small learning communities and small schools and their placement in them.
5. Placement of teachers and students shall result in an equitable distribution of student academic achievement profiles, demographic characteristics and teacher experience,

qualifications and racial/ethnic diversity. Voluntary placement of teachers and students in schools with grades six through eight is an option of the school district based on its goals for middle grades instruction, supervisory capacity, facilities, and school organization.

6. School districts provide appropriate space to accommodate small learning communities and small schools.
7. Teams of teachers qualified to teach the entire core curriculum and thematic course of study that are appropriate to the small learning community stay with the same group of students for all three years for grades six through eight of middle schools; and either all four years of high school; grades 10 through 12 with a ninth grade academy; or, grades nine and 10 and then grades 11 and 12 to achieve greater personalization of instruction and teacher knowledge of students.
8. Faculty and other staff are included in the preparation of grade-level, academic department and school budgets through representation on the school leadership council.
9. Teachers sharing students within the school/small learning community and within subjects shall be provided with at least three hours or three class periods weekly, whichever is less, of common planning time and early release/late start for coaching within the smaller organizational structure to facilitate collective responsibility for student success and to:
  - a. Ensure that the requirements in N.J.A.C. 6A:10A-3.1 are addressed;

- b. Assign students to appropriately rigorous classes;
- c. Provide or refer students to all services needed to support achievement on all CCCS;
- d. Track school and class attendance;
- e. Monitor expected progress toward graduation;
- f. Strengthen all teachers' delivery of rigorous instruction pursuant to the Professional License and Standards, N.J.A.C. 6A:9-3.2-3.3; and
- g. Evaluate student achievement data and best practices to include N.J.A.C 6A:10A-3.6(b), to identify the assistance required of school and school district leadership and to strengthen collegial responsibility.

#### Student and Family Advocacy

The design for greater personalization for all secondary students will be organized by teams of professional educators working with students in small structures and over sufficient periods to ensure they can track and support each student's well-being and academic progress, and that at least one professional educator assumes personal responsibility for working with a student and his or her family as part of this personalized learning environment. Districts will work with school counseling professionals to develop a Student and Family Advocacy Program which may reflect national school counseling standards and pursuant to N.J.C.A. 6A:8-3.2. Each small learning community or small school implements student and family advocacy in the following manner:

1. Each student and his/her family will be the official responsibility of one teacher or other professional staff member who will have groups of 20 students and families per staff member;
2. Advocates work with the same student and family over all years they are in the smaller organizational structure;
3. Advocates meet with assigned students bi-weekly by schedule and informally as well;
4. Advocates meet face-to-face and individually with each family and student at least twice during the school year;
5. Advocates receive professional development to support this role, including training in multicultural perspectives, use of student academic and behavioral profiles, communication skills, student and family referral processes, and use of family activity guides; and
6. Advocates assist in the preparation of an academic plan for each student that incorporates mastery of college-preparatory academics with the goal of graduation and notes any non-instructional needs. This plan shall be a part of each student's permanent academic record.