

TRACKING PROGRESS

ENGAGING COMMUNITIES

Abbott Indicators Summary Report

Newark

NEW JERSEY



SPRING 2005

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Public education helps today's children prepare for an adulthood when they can take meaningful roles in society, compete in the labor market, and contribute as members of their communities. New Jersey's children and youth have a constitutional right to a "thorough and efficient" free public education.

This represents our state's promise to all children and youth that they will receive an education that at least equips them with knowledge and skills to meet the state's rigorous academic standards. Until all of New Jersey's children receive the same high-quality education, this constitutional promise is not realized.

Introduction

Several years ago, education stakeholders recognized that children did not receive the same education throughout our state. Urban and suburban school districts did not have the same resources to support their schools. Thanks to the efforts of education professionals, parents, advocates, and the legislature, the lowest income cities and the wealthiest suburbs now have the same funding to support general education. The poorest urban school districts are also required to undergo a series of reforms and improvements to ensure that the funds are used to fulfill the constitutional promise.

Who should support these reforms and ensure that the schools continue to improve? Everyone who cares about public education. Schools belong first to the community and everyone in the community has a stake in them. Parents want their children to have the best education possible. Homeowners and businesses support public education through taxes. Community members want to be sure that their collective investment is used wisely and effectively to educate the children.

We wrote this report with Newark's education stakeholders in mind. The report is a tool to help them identify and support what is working and ensure that remaining challenges are overcome. The goal of an equally sound education for all New Jersey students is reachable with their continued support and commitment.

Newark Abbott Indicators Project and Report

Newark is one of 31 urban school districts in New Jersey known as Abbott districts. The name comes from a series of lawsuits, collectively known as *Abbott v. Burke*, in which the New Jersey Supreme Court directed the state to implement a series of interlocking remedies designed to provide children with a thorough and efficient education.¹

As an Abbott district, Newark receives funding to equalize its per student general education budget with the most successful suburban school districts in the state. Newark's young people are also entitled to universal, high-quality preschool; reforms to

help them meet the state's rigorous standards for academic achievement in Kindergarten through Grade 12; safe, healthy, and educationally adequate school facilities; and many other programs and services to ensure that they come to school ready to learn. Through a series of indicators, the Newark Abbott Indicators Report presents the status of these reforms and student progress to date.

The Newark Abbott Indicators Report and three others we are releasing this year in Camden, Trenton, and Union City are products of the Abbott Indicators Project at the Education Law Center. The report is written for a wide audience: everyone with a stake in public education in Newark. The project goals are to:

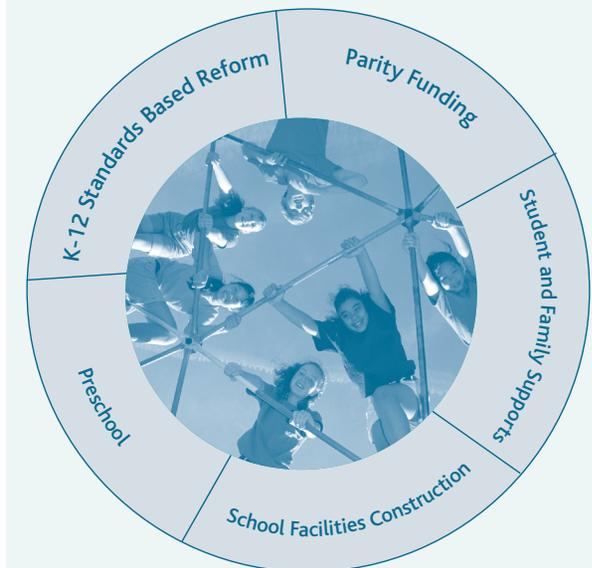
1. *Inform* people in Newark about the status of school improvement efforts and student outcomes.
2. *Engage* stakeholders in exploring and discussing what is working and what still needs to be done.
3. *Develop* and put a plan into action that supports school improvement.

4. *Establish* a system of accountability practices that local education stakeholders can use in years to come.

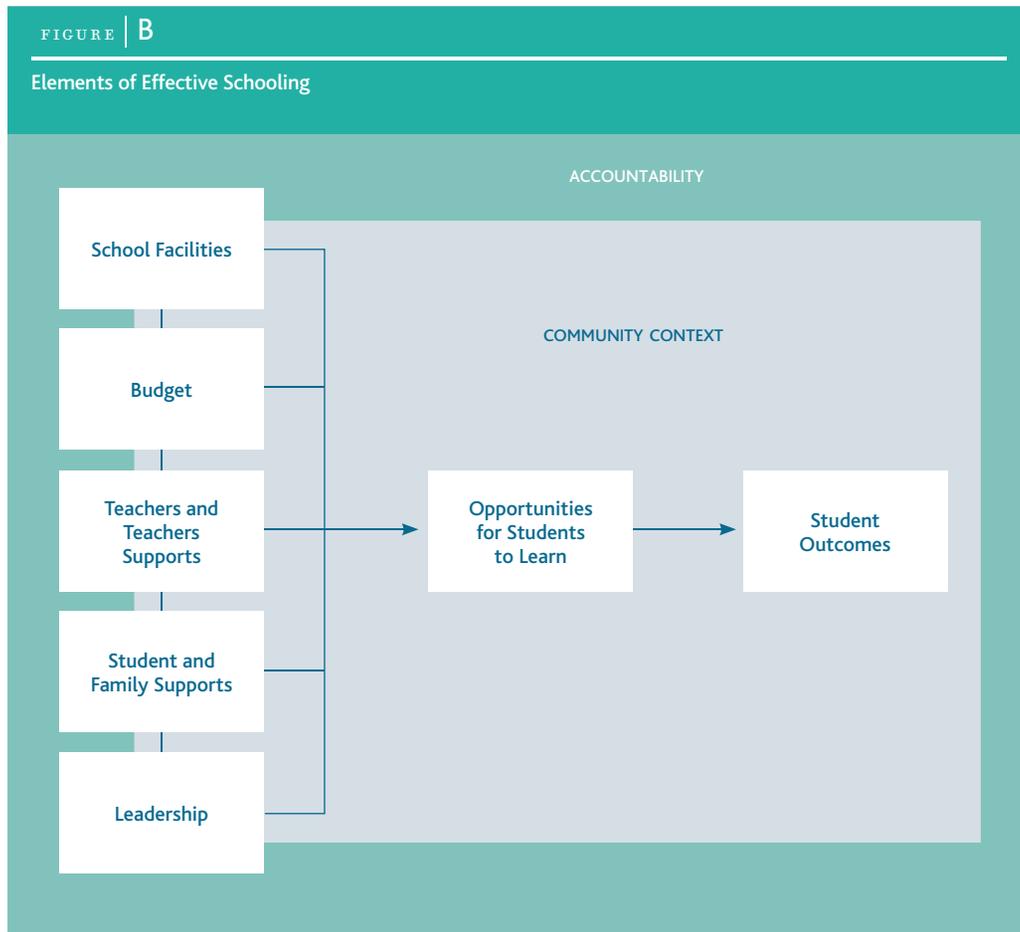
This is a summary version of the full Newark Abbott Indicators Report. In it, we first list indicators about Newark as a community and the students who are enrolled in the public schools. The remaining findings are organized by Abbott remedy: preschool, K-12 education (including standards-based reform and supports for students and families), and school facilities construction. All of the remedies we have in place in New Jersey are intended to work together to ensure a seamless plan for school improvement. They are presented separately because they have distinctive logics and requirements.

The indicators cover a broad range of topics about school practices and a number of student outcomes. We break down school practices into six "elements of effective schooling."² Ultimately, maximizing *opportunities for students to learn* is the main focus of school improvement efforts. Other elements of effective schooling are needed to provide students with these

FIGURE | A
Abbott v. Burke: New Jersey's Framework
for Urban School Improvement



Introduction



opportunities. These are: *student and family supports, teacher qualifications and supports, budget, leadership, and school facilities.*

Academic progress and student well-being are the end products of *all* of the elements of effective schooling. We encourage readers to view student outcomes in light of how well all of the elements of effective schooling have been implemented.

In the full technical report (available at www.edlawcenter.org), the findings from the full set of more than one hundred fifty indicators are presented with figures and more detailed discussion. We refer readers of this report to the technical report appendices for data sources and definitions, data collection and analysis methodology, and a glossary of terms.

Endnotes

1. More information about *Abbott v. Burke* is available at www.edlawcenter.org.

2. We thank Fred Frelow of the Rockefeller Foundation for suggesting this approach.

Research shows that living in concentrated poverty negatively affects the well-being and academic performance of children and youth. If our schools are to help all students meet the state's academic standards and grow up to take meaningful roles in their communities, these effects will need to be countered.



1

The Community and Students

FIGURE | 1.1

Conditions of Living and Learning in Newark

Municipal Characteristics	Newark	New Jersey
Population	273,546	8,414,350
Female Head of Household Families With Children 17 and Under	47%	18%
Highest Educational Attainment of Adults 25 and Over		
Less Than High School Diploma	42%	18%
Diploma or GED	30%	29%
Some College	18%	23%
Bachelor's Degree	6%	19%
Graduate or Professional Degree	3%	11%
Labor Force Participation	53%	64%
Unemployment Rate	16.1%	5.8%
Median Household Income	\$26,913	\$55,146
Population Below Poverty Level	28%	8%
Population 17 and Under Below Poverty Level	36%	11%
Foreign-born	24%	18%
Rent-income Ratio	27%	26%
Renter-occupied Housing	76%	34%
Vacant Housing	9%	7%
Violent Crime Rate (Per 1,000)	12.1	3.8

SOURCE | Uniform Crime Report, 2002; 2000 US Census

Here, we present indicators of community distress that inform the elements of effective schooling:

- Despite recent improvements in the city's housing stock and downtown area, Newark remains the second poorest city in the nation.³
- At 16 percent in 2000, the unemployment rate was about three times higher in Newark than it was statewide.
- In 2000, more than one in four Newark residents lived below the poverty level compared to eight percent of residents statewide. That same year, more than one in three children in Newark lived in families earning below the poverty level compared to 11 percent throughout New Jersey.
- In 2002, the violent crime rate was about three times higher in Newark than it was throughout the state.

The students who attend the public schools reflect the families who live in Newark. Their unique characteristics must inform the educational content, the staff needed to teach and support teaching, the space and facilities in which teaching and learning occur, and the leadership that guides the whole educational process. Programs that meet the needs of Newark's

children and youth—such as bilingual programs and nutrition programs—also entail different budget needs.

- In 2003–04, nearly 70 percent of Newark’s public school students were eligible for free-or reduced-price lunch compared to about one in four students statewide.
- About 700 Newark children did not have a permanent home in 2003–04.
- Newark students move a great deal more than New Jersey students on average—nearly one in three entered or left school at least once during the 2002–03 school year. High student mobility disrupts educational progress and has negative effects on student learning.

Endnotes

3. 2003 American Community Survey, U.S. Bureau of the Census.

FIGURE | 1.2

Characteristics of Students in Newark

	Newark	All Other Abbott Districts	I and J Districts	New Jersey
Total Enrollment	48,751			
Eligible for Free-/Reduced-price Lunch	69.7%	68.3%	3.3%	26.2%
Race/Ethnicity				
Black	59.4%	38.6%	4.4%	17.1%
Latino/a	31.3%	44.2%	3.6%	17.1%
White	8.3%	13.7%	80.3%	58.5%
Asian	0.8%	3.2%	11.5%	7.1%
Native American	0.1%	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%
Limited English Proficiency (LEP)	8.8%	12.1%	1.5%	4.8%
Students with Disabilities (IEP)	10.3%	13.0%	12.0%	13.1%
Immigrant	7.0%	–	–	–
Homeless	1.4%	–	–	–
Student Mobility Rate	29.7%	21.6%	5.2%	12.2%

SOURCE | Fall Survey, 2003–04; School Report Card, 2002–03; and Newark Public Schools, 2003–04

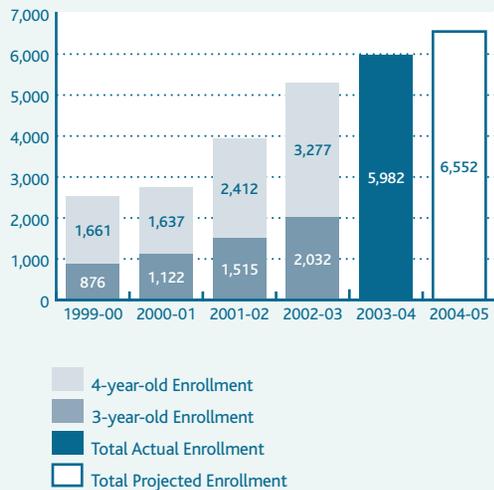
The Abbott preschool remedy is based on research showing that intensive, high-quality preschool programs can help children perform better in school and participate more productively in the life of their communities as adults. Abbott preschool began in 1999–00; by 2005–06, all Abbott districts are required to serve 90 percent of the eligible population.

2

2 | The Preschool Program

FIGURE | 2.1

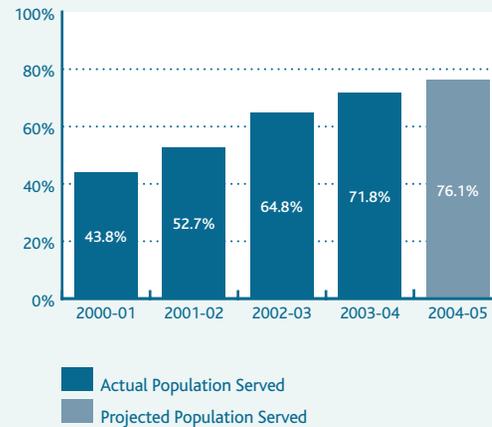
Preschool Enrollment: Newark, 1999–00 to 2004–05



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Early Childhood Programs, 2003; New Jersey Department of Education: Office of School Funding, 1999–2004

FIGURE | 2.2

Preschool Population Served: Newark, 2000–01 to 2004–05



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Early Childhood Programs, 2003; New Jersey Department of Education: Office of School Funding, 1999–2004

The major features of Abbott preschool are:

- Six-hour school day, 182 days a year;
- Provisions for full-day, full-year wrap-around child care services;⁴
- Certified teacher and an assistant for each class;
- Maximum class size of 15 students;
- Adequate facilities;
- Transportation, health and other related services, as needed;
- Developmentally appropriate curriculum that meets the state’s Early Childhood Education Program Expectations Standards of Quality and is linked with New Jersey’s Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS);
- Adequate state funding for all programs; and
- All three- and four-year-old children residing in the school district are eligible, with enrollment on demand.⁵

Opportunities for Students to Learn

Program Enrollment. By 2005–06, all Abbott districts are required to enroll 90 percent of their eligible populations of three- and four-year-olds.

- The information provided by the district suggests that to date, it has used creative strategies to identify and recruit children into its preschool program. Despite its efforts, only about three-quarters of the city’s eligible three- and

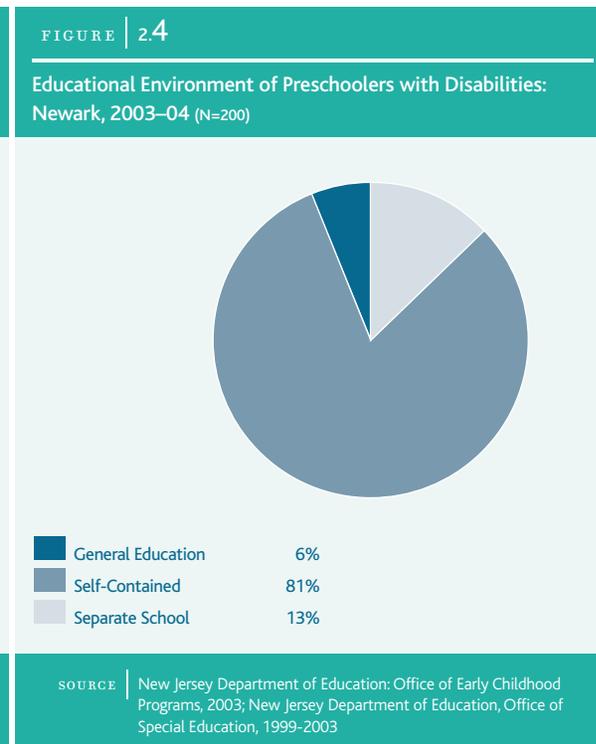
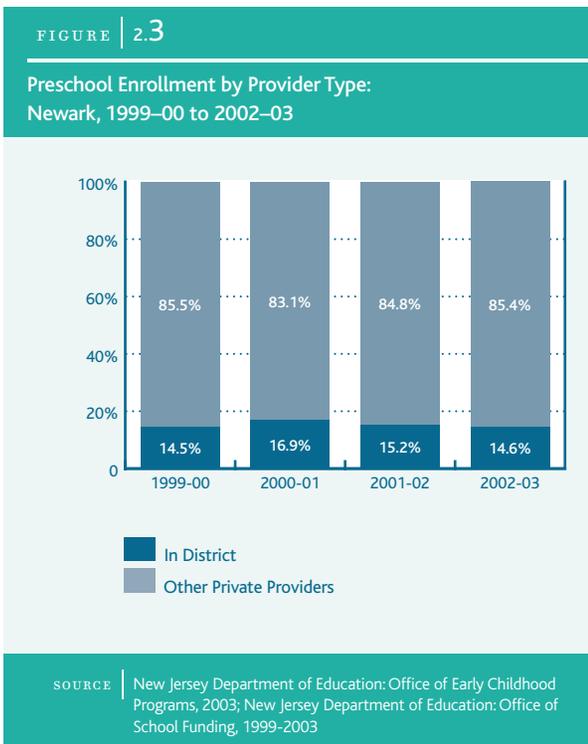
four-year-olds were in the preschool program in 2003–04. Neighborhoods with the greatest number of three- and four-year olds may not have the capacity to serve all of their eligible children, while those with fewer youngsters have slots that go unused. In the past two years, the district has moved program slots among providers and even closed some programs altogether. The district has also turned away providers wanting to set up new preschool programs.

➤ The Newark Public Schools contracted with 54 other private providers to offer Abbott preschool in over 100 sites (including four Head Start programs in 39 sites). The district runs 36 preschool programs in its own buildings. Since the Abbott preschool program began in 1999–00, the district has placed more children in community-run programs than in district-run programs. From 1999–00 and 2002–03, between 83 and 85 percent of children enrolled in preschool were served in community programs (Figure 2.3).

Programs for Children with Disabilities.

The law requires that school districts provide children with disabilities with educational experiences and services tailored to their individual needs. For as much time as possible, this education must be in an environment with general education students and not in self-contained settings.

➤ Eighty-one percent of Newark’s 200 preschoolers with disabilities were educated in self-contained classrooms.



2

The Preschool Program

FIGURE | 2.5

Preschool Classroom Environment (ECERS-R) Ratings: Newark and All Abbott Districts, 2002-03

Rating and Quality

1 = Inadequate
 3 = Minimal
 5 = Good
 7 = Excellent

	NEWARK		ALL ABBOTT DISTRICTS	
	Average	Range	Average	Range
Number of classrooms observed	15		310	
Space and Furnishings	3.8	2.1 - 5.6	3.8	1.4 - 6.6
Personal Care	4.2	1.5 - 7.0	3.7	1.0 - 7.0
Language & Reasoning	4.1	1.5 - 6.3	4.3	1.0 - 7.0
Activities	3.2	1.9 - 4.6	3.4	1.2 - 7.0
Interactions	5.2	1.0 - 7.0	4.9	1.0 - 7.0
Program Structure	3.6	1.0 - 6.7	4.0	1.0 - 7.0
Parents and Staff	4.5	2.2 - 6.3	4.4	1.0 - 6.8
Overall ECERS-R Score	4.0	1.9 - 5.2	4.0	1.6 - 6.3

SOURCE | Early Learning Improvement Consortium, Spring 2003

Curriculum. The New Jersey Department of Education's *Early Childhood Education Program Expectations: Standards of Quality* set standards for learning outcomes and outlines how teachers should conduct specific activities. Since they were released in 2002-03, the *Expectations* have become the benchmark for determining how effectively the classroom curriculum is being implemented.

- The district operated a small preschool program before Abbott and used the High/Scope model. High/Scope emphasizes learning through play and the quality of children's interactions with adults and other children. Now, the district encourages district-run programs to use a version of High/Scope that better meets the state's *Expectations* and curriculum standards set by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Although some district programs and many private provider programs select their own curricula, the district tries to ensure that these curricula are compatible with High/Scope. Curiosity Corner and Bank Street are two other curricula used in Newark that are highly respected in the field of Early Childhood education.
- In 2004-05, the Newark Public Schools began looking for a new preschool curriculum that will be adopted in both district and community provider programs throughout the city to ensure uniformity and a seamless transition for

preschoolers from program to program and as they transition into Kindergarten.

Program Quality. One good way to understand the strengths, weaknesses, and challenges confronted by Abbott preschool programs is to have a consistent and reliable method of measuring program quality that is used regularly in all public preschool programs, including the Abbott districts.

- A state-sponsored study found that Newark's overall program quality was the same as the Abbott districts on average. The strongest feature of the program, earning a score slightly above "good," was the quality of discipline, supervision, and emotional support in the classroom.
- More data on program quality—such as the results of reliable measures like the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised—are needed in all Abbott districts so that we can understand the strengths, weaknesses, and challenges confronted by their preschool programs.

Preschool Teacher Qualifications and Supports

Educational Attainment of Preschool Teachers. Abbott preschool teachers are required to have a bachelor's degree. This

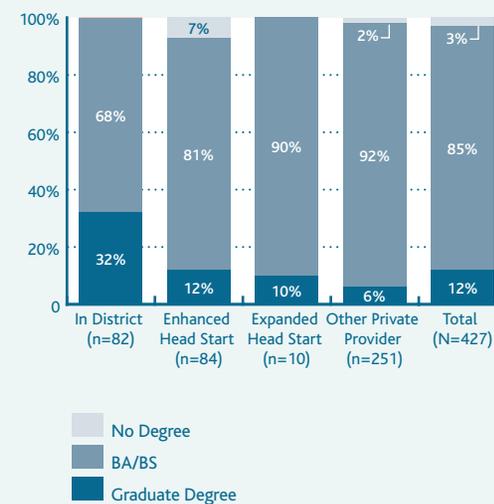
standard applies immediately to all teachers working in district-run programs. Teachers in community programs who need fewer than 30 credits may be eligible for an extension until September 2006. Head Start teachers have four years from the date when their program first contracted with an Abbott district to complete this requirement.

- In 2004-05, nearly all of the 427 teachers in district-run, Head Start, and other private provider programs had earned at least a four-year college degree as required.

Preschool Teacher Certification. In addition to a bachelor's degree, Abbott preschool teachers must also be certified.⁶ Preschool through Grade 3 (P-3) is the standard certification for all new teachers entering Abbott preschool programs. One route teachers can use to earn the P-3 is to first obtain a provisional "certificate of eligibility" (CE) or a certificate of eligibility with advanced standing (CEAS). While teaching in a preschool program, teachers then complete a series of mentoring and evaluation sessions. CE candidates must also take part in early childhood instructional training. Teachers with

FIGURE | 2.6

Preschool Teacher Educational Attainment: Newark, 2004–05

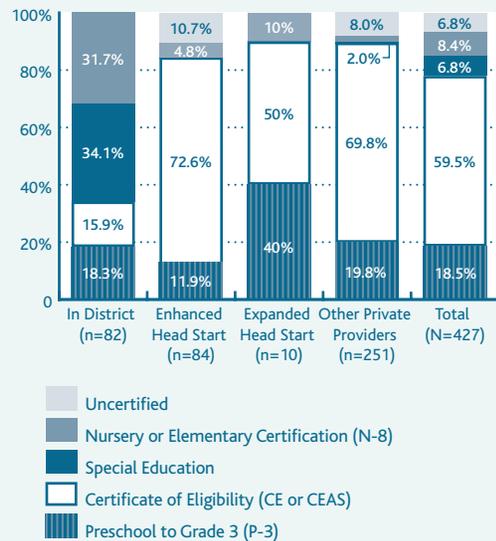


SOURCE | Newark Public Schools, 2004-05

2 | The Preschool Program

FIGURE | 2.7

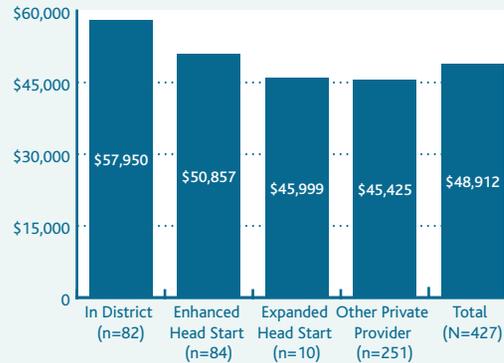
Preschool Teacher Certification by Provider Type: Newark, 2004–05



SOURCE | Newark Public Schools, 2004-05

FIGURE | 2.8

Average Preschool Teacher Salary: Newark, 2004–05



SOURCE | Newark Public Schools, 2004-05

a standard certificate to teach students in nursery school through Grade 8 (N-8) and at least two years of full-time teaching experience in an early childhood setting also fulfill the certification requirement under a “grandfather clause” in the regulations. Teachers with special education certification may only teach self-contained early childhood classrooms or serve as a second teacher in an inclusion classroom.

➤ Newark’s preschool teachers were on their way to meeting the Abbott certification requirement. In 2004–05, all teachers in district-run and Expanded Head Start programs had at least provisional certification.⁷ Nine out of 84 teachers (10.7%) in Enhanced Head Start programs and 20 of the 251 teachers (8%) in other private provider programs still needed to fulfill this requirement.

Preschool Teacher Salary. All other things being equal, school districts that pay teachers well are more likely to attract a broader pool of applicants for teaching positions. Improving preschool teacher pay may also help to improve preschool program quality by reducing teacher turnover and boosting teacher morale. The State Supreme Court recognized this in 2002

when it ordered the New Jersey Department of Education to provide funds to help Head Start and other private provider programs raise their teacher salaries to levels equal to those of teachers in district-run programs.

- In Newark, the average preschool teacher salary was \$48,912. On average, preschool teachers in district-run programs earned almost \$13,000 more than teachers in any other provider type. The reasons for this continued difference in salaries is unclear. When compared to teachers in the other provider types, teachers in district-run programs have similar levels of education and certification and years of experience as lead teacher.

Preschool Budget

The Abbott preschool program is funded by the state from two different sources. Early Childhood Program Aid (ECPA) is allocated to all Abbott districts and another 102 school districts serving low-income students. Since 2002–03, Abbott districts also receive Preschool Expansion Aid (PSEA) to cover the costs of expanding the programs to meet full enrollment.

- At \$12,921 per preschooler in 2003–04, Newark’s preschool aid was comparable to the district’s combined per student budget for Kindergarten through Grade 12.

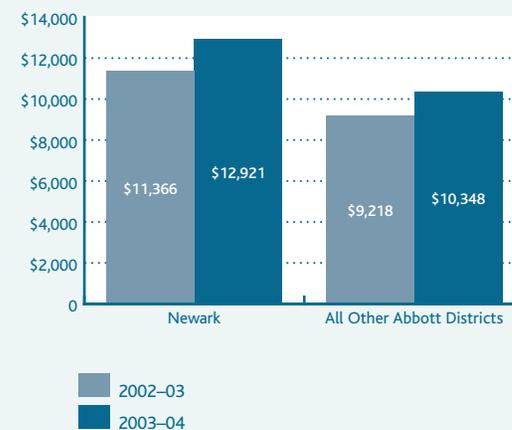
Preschool Leadership

State regulations require each Abbott school district to establish an Early Childhood Education Advisory Council (ECEAC). The ECEAC is a group of community stakeholders who are interested in the education and welfare of preschool-age children. The purpose of the ECEAC is to meet regularly, review the school district’s progress towards full implementation of high-quality preschool programs, and participate in program planning, budget development, and early childhood facilities planning.

- Prior to 2002–03, the district had an Early Childhood Collaborative (NECC), which represented all district-run and community provider programs participating in the Abbott preschool program. In 2002–03, the Newark Public Schools established the Early Childhood Education Advisory Council (ECEAC) made up of parents, community leaders, private provider program directors, general and special education teachers; and representatives from the district’s Early Childhood office, the New Jersey Department of Education’s Office of Early

FIGURE | 2.9

Per Student Preschool Aid: Newark and All Other Abbott Districts, 2002–03 and 2003–04



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education, Office of School Funding, 2002–2004

2

The Preschool Program

FIGURE | 2.10

Abbott Preschool Program: Benchmark Status In Newark

Benchmark	Status
District teachers required to have bachelor's degree	Met
Expanded Head Start teachers have four years from the date their program contracted with district to earn bachelor's degree	Met
District teachers required to have certification	Met
Expanded Head Start teachers have four years from the date their program contracted with district to earn certification.	Met

Childhood Education, Head Start, the Newark Preschool Coalition, Essex County government, and local businesses.

- In keeping with the district's understanding of the New Jersey Department of Education guidelines, Newark's ECEAC has not been involved in developing district plans and budgets. The ECEAC reviews the results of the district's self-evaluation and provides feedback on areas needing improvement. The ECEAC has an opportunity to provide input on early childhood facilities construction plans. In addition, a member of the council is involved in district-wide facilities planning on an ongoing basis.

Preschool Student Outcomes

We turn to outcomes to ask if the elements discussed so far—student and family characteristics, opportunities for students to learn, teacher qualifications and supports, budget, and leadership—have worked together to improve student learning among the district's three- and four-year-olds.

- As a recent report published by the United States Government Accountability Office noted, New Jersey's public preschools do not currently generate consistent and reliable information that will help us to understand how well children are doing statewide. We need to strike a balance between the concerns of early child-

hood education specialists about widespread assessment on young children and the need to know exactly how well the programs are serving Abbott preschoolers. Outcome measures are needed to help stakeholders to identify programs that work and those that need more assistance.

Endnotes

4. The New Jersey Department of Education covers the cost for six hours, 180 days per year of preschool education. The New Jersey Department of Human Services funds before- and after-school "wraparound" care and care during the summer to provide a ten-hour, 245-day per year program.

5. Age eligibility for three- and four-year-olds is based on the date the district uses to determine age eligibility for Kindergarten.

6. As with the Abbott preschool teacher education requirement, the certification standard applied immediately to teachers in district-run programs. Teachers in community provider programs have until September 2006, and Head Start teachers

have four years from the date when their program contracted with the Abbott district. The Newark Public Schools, however, did not grant teachers in community provider programs this extension unless they had earned at least 90 credits by September 2004.

7. There are two types of Head Start programs: Enhanced Head Start, the program under which existing Head Start seats are upgraded to meet Abbott standards; and Expanded Head Start, the program serving children previously not enrolled in the Federal Head Start program.

New Jersey's Core Curriculum Content Standards (NJCCCS) define what all students should know and be able to do at each grade and by the time they graduate from high school. Abbott provides several means to help students in low-income, urban districts achieve these standards.

3

3

K-12 Education

Abbott Indicators in Newark: A State-Operated District

The Newark Public Schools has been a state-operated district since failing certification by the State Board of Education in 1995. Community members who reviewed this report in draft form were surprised that the findings contained so little evidence of the New Jersey Department of Education's role in operating the district. According to a recent report by Rutgers University, Institute for Education Law and Policy, minimal state involvement should not have been surprising. The Rutgers report finds that New Jersey's takeover plan did not specify steps for the district to take in order to regain local control. The report also notes that the state's takeover effort did not include plans to build the district's local capacity. Newark and the other state takeover districts have identified their own school improvement plans and monitored their own progress. A likely explanation for the absence of state intervention in the Newark Abbott Indicators Report is that Newark has developed, implemented, and monitored its school reform efforts largely through its own initiative.

These include:

- Funding at the same level as the wealthiest ("I and J") suburban districts in the state;
- Class size limits;
- Comprehensive, or "whole-school" reform;
- Programs and services to meet the needs of students and their families;
- Assessment in each content area to measure student improvement at the classroom, school, and district levels; and
- Ways to help "low-performing" schools improve.

As a first step toward decentralizing the district and bringing the educational structure closer to communities, the district was organized into five School Leadership Teams (SLT). Four serve a defined geographic area; the fifth, (SLT II) contains all of the high schools citywide. The purpose of the SLTs is to enable the district to directly address the specific educational needs of the diverse communities within the city and promote increased parent and community involvement.

Opportunities for Students to Learn

Class Size. Research suggests that smaller class sizes can help teachers spend less time

on behavior management and more time on instruction that is better attuned to students' needs. In fact, there is strong evidence that smaller class sizes help students in the early elementary grades to perform better in school. Evidence on the benefits of smaller class sizes for students in later grades is less clear. In recognition of the potential benefits to students of all ages, Abbott schools have class size standards as follows:

Kindergarten through Grade 3: 21

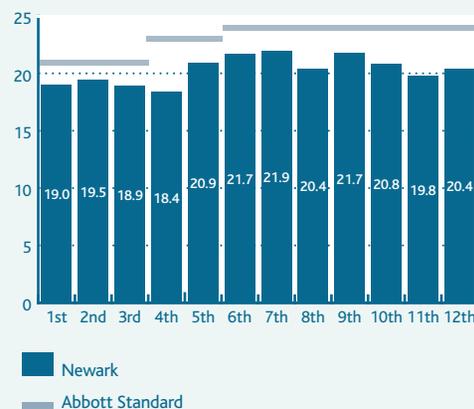
Grades 4 through 5: 23

Grades 6 through 12: 24

- Abbott funding has had some immediate, clear effects on conditions in the Newark schools: average class sizes are smaller (better) than the Abbott standard in all grades.
- District staff report, however, that in some areas of the city, particularly in the North and East wards, many class sizes still exceed the Abbott standard due to inadequate facilities.
- In Newark, the average elementary school class size was 21, above the other Abbott districts in 1994–95, but decreased to 18 per class in 2002–03, smaller on average than class sizes in the other Abbott districts. Elementary school class sizes across the state and in the wealthiest districts have stayed at about 20 students during the same period. Class sizes in the

FIGURE | 3.1

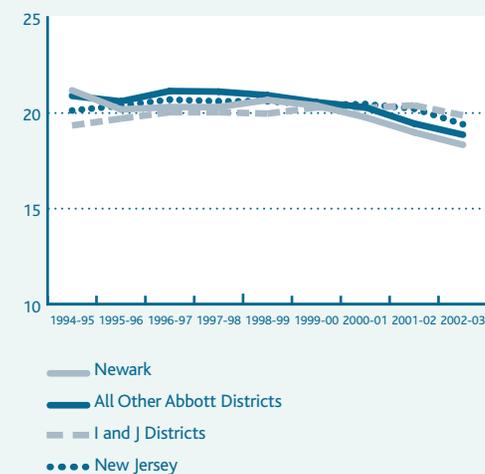
Average Class Size by Grade: Newark, 2002–03



SOURCE | School Report Card, 2002–03

FIGURE | 3.2

Elementary School Average Class Size by District Grouping, 1994–95 to 2002–03



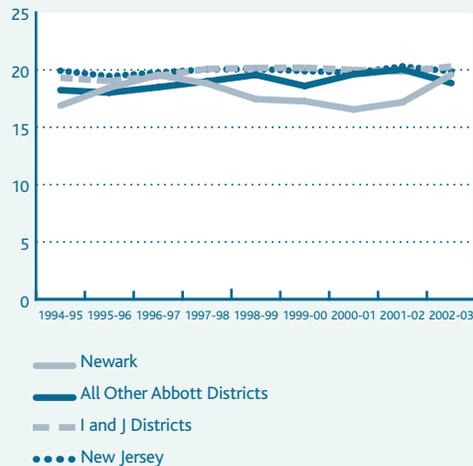
SOURCE | School Report Card, 1994–95 to 2002–03

3

K-12 Education

FIGURE 3.3

High School Average Class Size by District Grouping, 1994–95 to 2002–03



SOURCE | School Report Card, 1994-95 to 2002-03

Abbott elementary schools—other than Newark—have decreased from 21 to just under 19.

- High school class sizes in Newark have been going up and down. Newark's high school class sizes were at 17 in 1994–95 and ended at 20 in 2002–03, growing about 18 percent over all. In most of the years we examined, Newark's high school class sizes were smaller than the average in the other Abbott districts.

Programs for Children with Disabilities.

The law requires that school districts provide children with disabilities with educational experiences and services tailored to their individual needs. For as much time as possible, this education must be in an environment with general education students and not in self-contained settings.

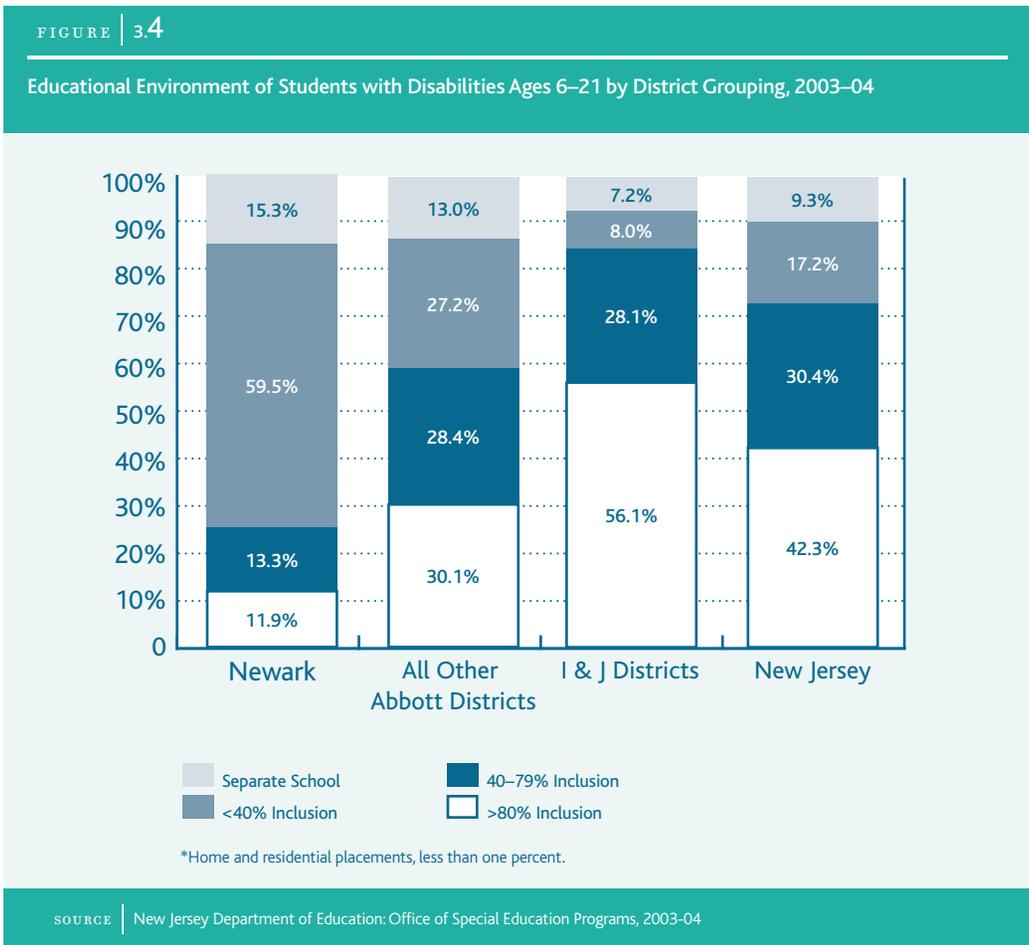
- Newark has 6,575 special needs students ages six to 21. Only about 12 percent of students with disabilities go to school in a “very inclusive” setting where they are educated with general education students for 80 percent or more of the school day. More than half (59%) of the students with disabilities in Newark are in self-contained classrooms for a major portion of the day (spending less than 40 percent of the day in general education classrooms)—a much greater percentage than in the state as a whole (17%) and the wealthiest districts (8%).

College Preparatory Classes. Nationwide, high school students of color are under-represented in college admissions. One reason might be a lack of opportunity to learn challenging material that would make them more competitive applicants.

- Newark’s high schools offer honors and advanced placement courses to help students become more competitive applicants and prepare them for college. We compared Newark’s honors and AP course offerings to those in Glen Ridge, a nearby “I” district. Newark offers 23 courses compared to Glen Ridge’s 25. Newark has all but three of the same courses as Glen Ridge: Math Analysis Honors, AP Physics, and AP Studio Art. Unlike Newark, Glen Ridge does not offer AP European History.
- The district also has a pre-engineering program it runs in cooperation with the New Jersey Institute of Technology called “Project Lead the Way.” Students in the project can take Principles of Engineering, Introduction to Engineering Design, Engineering Robotics, and Engineering Design and Development.

Student and Family Supports

Under Abbott, the State funds and the districts implement “supplemental programs.” The purpose of these programs is to address disadvantages experienced by young people



3

K-12 Education

The purpose of Abbott supplemental programs is to address disadvantages experienced by young people who grow up in poor cities.

who grow up in poor cities. There are two kinds of “supplemental” programs under Abbott. Some programs are required; funding to support other programs is available if a school or district can show that the students need them. Below, we present information on some of the supplemental programs and services available in Newark’s public schools: intensive early literacy; parent involvement; access to technology; alternative education and dropout prevention; and enriched nutrition programs. More supplemental programs are described in the larger technical report.

Early Literacy. Under Abbott, schools are required to provide 90-minute blocks of reading instruction to children in Kindergarten through Grade 3. Students in Grades 1 through 3 who are not reading at grade level must receive one-on-one tutoring; older elementary grade students not reading at grade level must receive small-group tutoring.

➤ We reviewed early literacy programs in five schools that serve students in the early elementary grades and through operational plans posted on the Internet. Our impression is that schools use different programs to meet early literacy needs. Examples include: Thematic

Learning and Kinder Roots, Rigby Reading Program, the Balanced Literacy Program, Children’s Literacy Initiative, and Leap Frog. Most programs provide guided and independent instruction in reading and writing. Some schools have a parent-child reading program, and some have home-lending libraries.

➤ In 2003–04, not all of the schools we visited had a literacy tutor to hold one-on-one or small-group tutoring sessions for students who were not reading on grade level. Four out of five schools had some small-group tutoring. Three offered tutoring for some grades, but not others: First Avenue and Benjamin Franklin Schools offered tutoring to students in Grade 1 only; and Eighteenth Avenue offered tutoring to students in Grades 1 through 3. Mount Vernon School did not provide literacy tutoring to any students because it lacked the specialized staff. All of the schools cited staffing or budget limits as the reason they did not have the complete tutoring programs required by Abbott. Only Hawkins Elementary School offered tutoring to all students reading below grade level in Kindergarten through Grade 8. Hawkins was able to provide these services with a reading specialist tutoring students in Kindergarten through Grade 3, and the Soar to Success program for students in Grades 4 through 8 needing extra help.

Parent Involvement. Emerging research suggests that children with parents who are involved in their *learning* are more likely to

attend school, earn higher grades, improve their social skills, graduate from high school and go on to college. Parent involvement in the school can be important too if it is linked to improving learning, developing specific skills or encouraging children to take more challenging classes. Parent involvement can also build a sense of community accountability for student learning. Under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, districts are required to use a portion of their federal funding to form and support a district parent advisory council. Abbott schools are required to make efforts to involve parents and caregivers in their children's education and in general school decision-making. At the very least, each school should have a parent-community coordinator or a family liaison, and parent representation on its School Leadership Committees (SLC).

- SLC chairs at all six schools we visited told us that there are parent representatives on their management teams.
- The Newark Public Schools has policies to encourage parent involvement and establish school-home-community partnerships in every school. The district's policy requires each school

to implement the following: 1) at least two parent-teacher conferences per year; 2) communications with parents during the year through newsletters and flyers; 3) have a school-parent organization; and 4) workshops and conferences to help parents help their children with their school work at home.

- The district has established Parent Involvement Resource Centers at four schools in the district: Camden Middle, Luis Muñoz Marin Middle, Harold Wilson, and William H. Brown. The centers provide libraries of materials and have offered parents workshops on topics such as: Computer Literacy; Effective Parent/Teacher Conferences; Helping Your Child With Math; Raising Readers; Leave No Child Behind; and Parents Rights and Responsibilities.
- Where space allows, schools in the district have parent rooms where resources and information are provided. The district also has a number of groups, such as the Concerned Fathers of The Newark Public Schools, the Special Education Parents' Advisory Committee and the Grandparents Support Network, which serve as a source of support for caregivers and enable them to become more involved in their children's education.

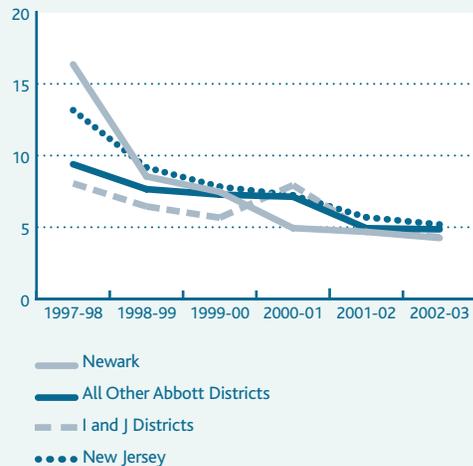
Access to Technology. Under Abbott, there should be no more than five students to each computer in each school throughout the district. Abbott districts are also required to have staff who make sure that: students master the

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K-12 Education

FIGURE | 3.5

Student–Computer Ratio by District Grouping,
1997–98 to 2002–03



SOURCE | School Report Card, 1994-95 to 2002-03

technology needed to reach the state’s Core Curriculum Content Standards; classrooms and libraries have adequate equipment; and technology is effectively used to support teaching and learning.

➤ Newark students had dramatically better access to computers after the first year of Abbott and that access kept improving throughout the time period. In 1997–98, there was one computer to every 16 students on average, compared to about nine students per computer in the next year. By 2002–03, Newark had purchased enough computers to ensure that there was a computer for every four students in the district. The number of computers improved dramatically in the other Abbott districts too. The average number of students to every computer decreased from 9.4 to 4.9 in the other Abbott districts, better (lower) than the Abbott standard. Access to computers in school also improved throughout the state and in the wealthiest districts.

Alternative Education. Abbott districts are also required to identify and provide services to students at risk of failing and dropping out. At a minimum, the districts are required to provide alternative programs for young people in middle and high school, and

be adequately staffed with dropout prevention specialists.

➤ In Newark, the Family Support Team at the elementary school level and Dropout Prevention Coordinator at the high school level are responsible for identifying students who may be at-risk for dropping out of school. When they spot risk indicators—such as repeated suspensions or extended absenteeism—they call families or conduct home visits. In some instances, they refer students and families for counseling. Seriously at-risk students are referred to an alternative program.

➤ Students who are having difficulty at their regular high schools have the option of attending twilight programs (3–7 P.M.). Collectively, these programs are called the “Renaissance Academy.” There are six Renaissance alternative programs throughout the city, one at each of the comprehensive high schools. At-risk students ages 11 to 15 attend an alternative (“Renaissance”) middle school program. There are four such programs, one located within each SLT in the district (one program is dedicated to over-age middle school students). Renaissance programs are meant to be short-term, but some students who thrive in them are allowed to stay.

Enriched Nutrition. If schools demonstrate student need, they can receive funding to develop a nutrition program that provides high-quality breakfast and lunch for all

students and a high-quality snack for after-school students.

➤ In Newark, breakfast and lunch is provided to students every day. Staff observed that breakfast and lunch programs are more heavily used in the middle of the month when their parents are most likely to run out of money. Newark Public Schools contracts for cafeteria services to provide snacks to all after-school program participants. The district provides three meals a day to any student who walks into any summer school site in the city to ensure that students have nutritious meals throughout the summer.

K-12 Teacher Qualifications and Supports

Highly Qualified Teachers. The Federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) outlines several measures that schools and districts must take to ensure a quality public education to all of their students. One provision requires that certain teachers must be “highly qualified” in each subject they teach.⁸ The requirements of becoming highly qualified vary depending on when the teacher is hired and what type of school he or she teaches in. In general, a teacher must hold a four-year college degree, be fully certified, and show a level of knowledge in his or her subject matter by passing a

state test. New middle and high school teachers must also have a certain number of college credits in the subject matter they teach. The law applies equally to teachers who teach many core subjects (such as many elementary school and special education teachers), those who specialize in a single subject (such as many middle and high school teachers), basic skills teachers, and bilingual and ESL teachers.

All districts must submit a “highly qualified teacher” report. Many districts, including Newark, had difficulty compiling the information needed to fulfill this reporting requirement. Reading left to right, the three sets of grouped bars in Figure 3.6 show the percent who are highly qualified in at least *one* subject, the percent who are highly qualified in *all* core subjects, and the percent of core subject area *classes* taught by a highly qualified teacher.

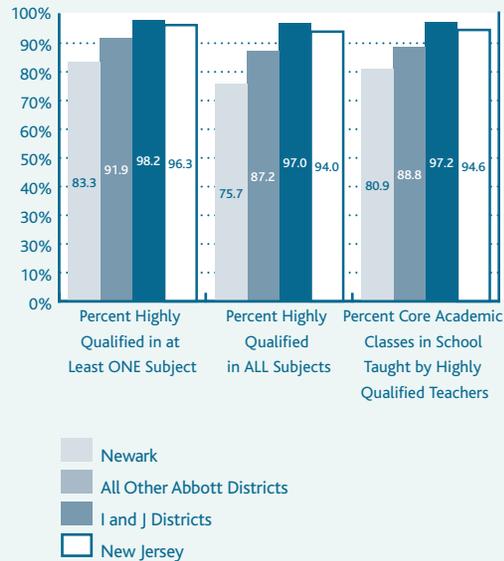
➤ In 2003–04, more than four out of five Newark elementary school teachers were highly qualified in at least one subject and three out of four were highly qualified in all of the core subjects they taught. Four out of five *core* classes were taught by a highly qualified teacher. Even so, Newark had the lowest percentage of highly

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K-12 Education

FIGURE | 3.6

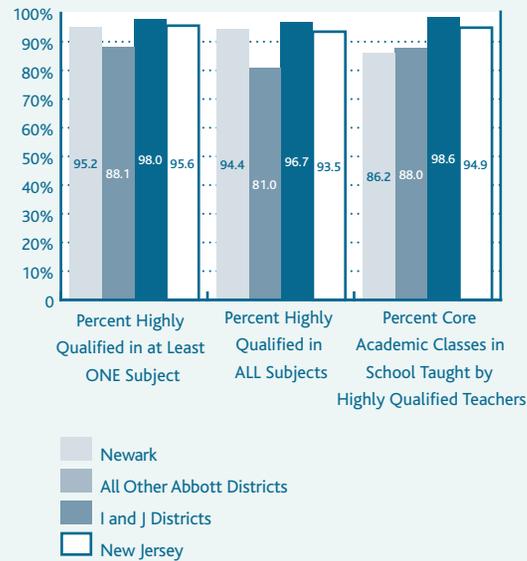
Highly Qualified Teachers by District Grouping:
Elementary Schools, 2003–04



SOURCE | Highly Qualified Teacher Survey, 2004

FIGURE | 3.7

Highly Qualified Teachers by District Grouping:
High Schools, 2003–04



SOURCE | Highly Qualified Teacher Survey, 2004

qualified teachers in its elementary schools of all of the district groupings we examined.

- A large majority of New Jersey’s high school teachers are highly qualified and Newark’s high school teaching staff compared well with the other district groupings. Ninety-five percent were highly qualified in at least *one* subject they taught and 94 percent were highly qualified in *all* of the subjects they taught. Somewhat fewer core classes were taught by highly qualified teachers in Newark’s high schools (86%).

Staffing Patterns. Several staffing positions are needed to put the Abbott reforms into action. Some positions are required in all schools, others are specific to elementary or secondary schools.

- In 2002–03 and 2003–04, Newark was in better compliance with elementary school staffing requirements than the other Abbott districts. The percentage of Newark elementary schools with teacher tutors available to assist children with reading problems doubled from 40 to 87 percent between 2002–03 and 2003–04. All Newark elementary schools had an instructional facilitator to coordinate Whole School Reform efforts and almost all had social workers.
- Newark had weaker compliance with the middle and high school Abbott staffing requirements. In 2003–04, about one in four schools serving students in middle and high school

grades had health and social service coordinators; about one in nine had dropout prevention coordinators.

- Almost all of Newark's schools had each of the following positions required under Abbott in 2003–04: family liaison, guidance counselor, media specialist, nurse, security officer, and technology coordinator.

K-12 Budget

Public education is, of course, an essential service provided by local governments and education costs are higher in school districts with high concentrations of low-income households. Because local taxes are based on property values, property wealth is a good indicator of the availability of money to support education.

- The wealthiest suburbs had almost four times more property wealth per student than Newark in 2003. That same year, the state average was more than double that of Newark.

General Education Funding.⁹ The basic source of general education funding in New Jersey is the local tax levy. In many school districts, the local tax levy is supplemented by state aid. Several sources of state aid—

FIGURE | 3.8

Percent of Schools with Required Abbott Staff Positions: Newark and All Other Abbott Districts, 2002-03 to 2003-04*

	Newark		All Other Abbott Districts	
	2002-03	2003-04	2002-03	2003-04
Elementary Schools Staff				
Instructional Facilitator	100.0%	100.0%	96.7%	94.2%
Social Worker	98.2%	98.2%	64.0%	62.9%
Teacher Tutor	40.0%	87.3%	21.5%	30.9%
All Positions	38.2%	85.5%	16.7%	23.6%
	Newark		All Other Abbott Districts	
	2002-03	2003-04	2002-03	2003-04
Middle and High Schools Staff				
Attendance/Dropout Prevention Officer	12.8%	10.9%	59.1%	62.8%
Health-Social Service Coordinator	23.4%	23.9%	37.5%	40.9%
All Positions	6.4%	6.5%	30.2%	30.1%
	Newark		All Other Abbott Districts	
	2002-03	2003-04	2002-03	2003-04
All Schools Staff				
Family Liaison (Parent-Community Coordinator)	92.0%	93.3%	63.6%	66.4%
Guidance Counselor	96.0%	96.0%	93.4%	93.1%
Librarian/Media Specialist	90.7%	90.7%	89.3%	91.2%
Nurse/Health Specialist	98.7%	98.7%	97.0%	96.7%
Security Officer	97.3%	97.3%	86.2%	87.3%
Tech Coordinator	97.3%	96.0%	79.3%	84.3%
All Positions	84.0%	84.0%	51.8%	51.2%

SOURCE | DOENET Abbott School-Based Budget Staffing Tables, 2002-03 to 2003-04

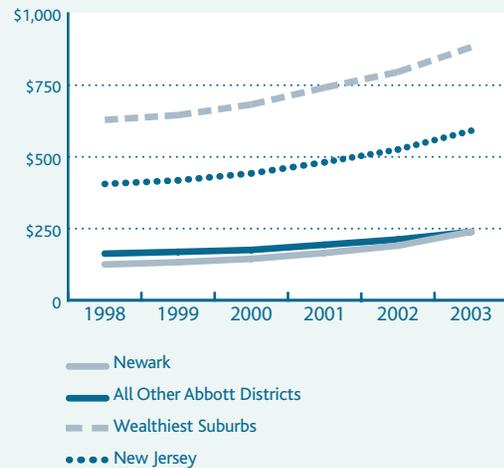
* Renaissance Academy's Abbott staffing was not in the district's DOENET report, and so is not included.

3

K-12 Education

FIGURE | 3.9

Average Property Value Per Student by District Grouping, 1998–2003



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Community Affairs: Office of Local Government Services, 1998–2003

available to all New Jersey school districts based on a formula—come out of the school funding law called the *Comprehensive Educational Improvement and Financing Act of 1996 (CEIFA)*. “Core Curriculum Standards Aid” (CCSA) makes up the difference between what school districts can afford and what the state estimates to be an adequate level of school funding to support a thorough and efficient education. Some districts also receive “Supplemental CCSA” to ease their local tax burdens. A third type of funding, “Stabilization Aid” goes to districts that might otherwise lose too much CCSA from year to year because of enrollment changes.

A key feature of Abbott is the requirement that general education funding in the poorest urban school districts be at a level *equal to* what is spent on average in our state’s most successful suburban districts. In recognition of the low property wealth and high tax rates in these districts, the state is required to provide the funding needed to achieve this equality. Abbott districts have received this

funding—called “Abbott Parity Aid”—from the state every year since 1997–98.¹⁰

➤ On a per student basis, Newark and the other Abbott districts have as much money as the successful suburban districts to support general education. In fact, there has been equity in funding for general education between the poorest cities and the wealthiest suburbs in New Jersey since 1997 when Abbott parity began.

Supplemental Programs Funding. To be ready and successful learners, the children and youth of Newark have unique needs for health, nutrition, and social services that must be addressed. There are three sources of money to support supplemental programs in Abbott districts: one comes from the federal government and two from the state. The federal funding is called “Title I” and provides funding for schools serving children from low-income families. The money is intended to improve educational quality and give extra help to struggling students. The second supplemental programs funding source, “Demonstrably Effective Program Aid” (DEPA), has been provided by the state since CEIFA. It is targeted to school districts serving poor

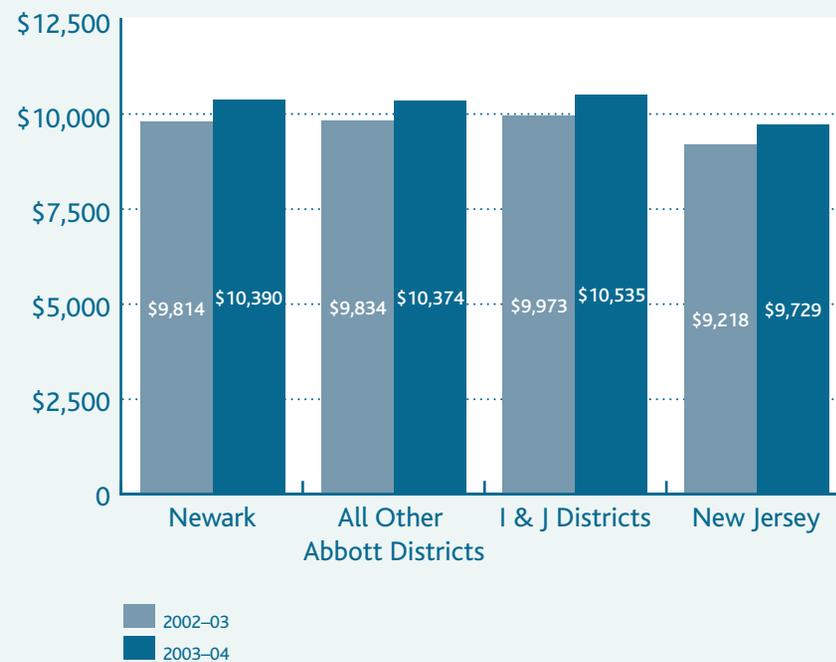
children and calculated on a per student basis. Both Abbott and non-Abbott districts may receive Title I and DEPA funds.

Only Abbott districts receive “Additional Abbott Aid,” the third source of supplemental programs funding. Each Abbott district must apply to the state for Additional Abbott Aid and justify its request with evidence of student need. The New Jersey Department of Education reviews district requests and issues its decisions. The state may fully fund, deny portions, or fund programs at lower levels than requested by the districts. School districts may appeal the state’s decision in court. Not surprisingly, this process has been a source of conflict between the Abbott districts and the New Jersey Department of Education since it began in 1999.

➤ In 2003–04, Newark received an additional \$3,546 per student in supplemental program aid to support the second half-day of Kindergarten and other programs and services to meet the needs of its students and their families. The per student amount Newark received in 2003–04 was about \$1,900 more than the average of the other Abbott districts.

FIGURE | 3.10

Per Student General Education Funding by District Grouping, 2002–03 and 2003–04



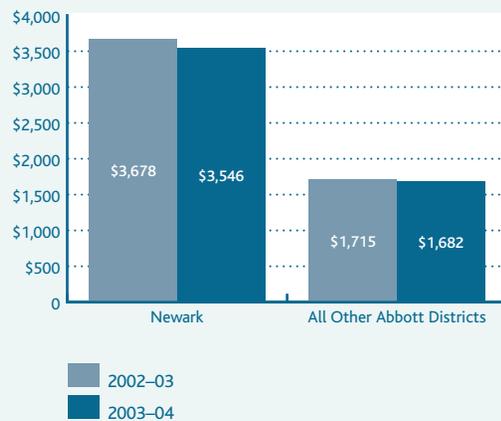
SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education, Office of School Funding, 2002–2004

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FIGURE 3.11

Per Student Supplemental Program Aid: Newark and All Other Abbott Districts, 2002–03 and 2003–04



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education, Office of School Funding, 2002–2004

K-12 Leadership

School Leadership Councils. State regulations require every school in the Abbott districts to have a School Leadership Council (SLC). The SLC is a group that serves on a volunteer basis to represent school staff and neighborhood residents. Their primary purpose is to help improve teaching and learning. They do this by taking part in program planning and decision-making and encouraging broad participation by school staff and neighborhood stakeholders. SLC members serve at least two years with staggered terms. SLCs should meet at least once a month.

SLCs should take part in a wide variety of activities to carry out their functions, including: reviewing needs assessment and achievement data; reviewing school-based budgets prepared by the central office and making recommendations to amend them; and participating in training provided by the district or the New Jersey Department of Education. SLCs that are trained to perform personnel functions may also interview school principal

candidates and recommend candidates to the district's Superintendent.

Along with the other Abbott districts, Newark used school-based budgeting in the early years of Abbott. These budgets were "zero-based," that is, they specified each and every needed program and staff member from the ground up. In general, SLCs took the lead in school-based planning and budgeting efforts, getting input from a variety of school staff and community members on needed programs and staffing.

In all of the Abbott districts, control over budgeting and planning moved away from the schools and their SLCs and returned to the district office in 2002–03. Since then, the process has begun with the district's business administrator, who sets school budgets based on a state template, previous spending levels, and a three percent cost-of-living increase. The district's business administrator sends a copy of each school's budget to its SLC for review and modification. SLCs may then be asked to support and sign their school's budget before it is packaged with the district's

budget and sent to the New Jersey Department of Education.

- Of the six schools we visited in Newark, five SLCs were organized into subcommittees. Some subcommittees addressed organizational issues such as staffing, budgeting, and curriculum; others addressed goals that the SLC had previously set during the district's planning process before the 2002–03 school year. All six participated in the three-year planning process, but the timing and extent of their participation varied widely.
- Four SLCs had the opportunity to vote in support of their schools' plans (as required by Abbott); three SLCs had the opportunity to vote in support of their budgets.

Abbott Advisory Council. Each Abbott district should have an “Abbott Advisory Council,” a steering committee that represents the district and its community stakeholders. The primary responsibility of the Council is to review district policies and procedures to implement the Abbott reforms.

- In Newark, the Abbott Advisory Council (AAC) is known as the Whole School Reform oversight committee. Members include: the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, Advisory Board members, parents, principals, teachers, union representatives, district administrative staff, and Whole School Reform developers.

- Despite the name, this committee's focus has shifted from Whole School Reform to meeting the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). The AAC explored which reform models were used and how well they were used by high- and low-performing schools respectively.

K-12 Student Outcomes

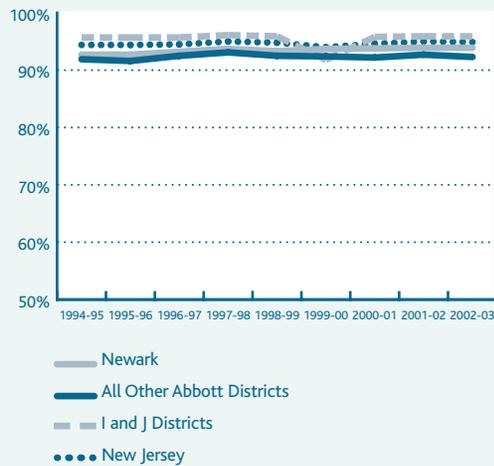
As education stakeholders, we need to ensure that educational success is not determined by where a student lives. We need to make sure that the schools provide: opportunities for students to learn; staff to teach students, and supports for that staff; adequate financial resources; a sound educational environment; and the leadership to guide the whole process. The Abbott remedies were intended to support efforts of schools, districts, parents and advocates to improve these elements of schooling. We cannot understand how schools or districts are doing—or help them to do better—unless we consider all of them. We encourage readers to review and consider the student outcomes presented below in light of the material presented up to this point.

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K-12 Education

FIGURE | 3.12

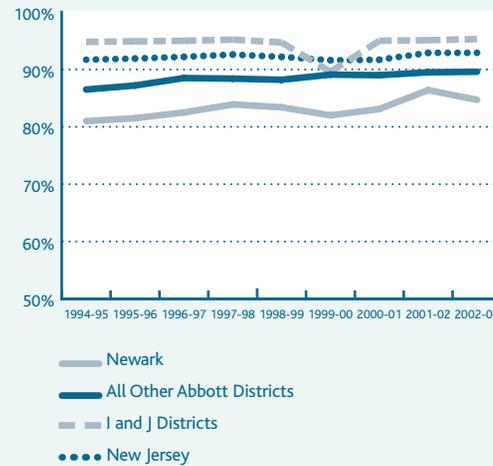
Student Attendance by District Grouping: Elementary Schools, 1994–95 to 2002–03



SOURCE | School Report Card, 1994–95 to 2002–03

FIGURE | 3.13

Student Attendance by District Grouping: High Schools, 1994–95 to 2002–03



SOURCE | School Report Card, 1994–95 to 2002–03

Student Attendance. Students who feel safe at school and are engaged in their academic work tend to go to school more often. Of course, students also miss school because of other reasons such as poor health and family problems. In general, we think that student attendance is an important indicator that school is a positive experience for children and youth and that the students' families, the district, and the larger community are addressing any obstacles to attendance that may exist. It is presented here as a leading indicator: students can only benefit from opportunities to learn if they attend school regularly.

- Newark's elementary school student attendance was at 92 percent in 1994–95 and has remained at about 92 or 93 percent through 2002–03. At the elementary school level, attendance across New Jersey was about 95 percent in 1994–95 and remained steady through 2002–03.
- Attendance rates in the high schools were lower than in the elementary schools across the state. Newark high school attendance was 81 percent in 1994–95 and 85 percent in 2002–03. Attendance was higher in the other Abbott districts and improved from 86 to 90 percent over the years. The high school attendance rate remained at about 92 percent across the state.

High school attendance was highest in the wealthiest suburbs at about 95 percent in all years except 1999–00.

Child and Youth Well-Being. Children and youth who are physically, socially, and emotionally healthy are better able to learn at school. Many of Abbott’s supplemental programs have as their purpose to improve the well-being of children and youth of New Jersey’s cities. School staff either provide direct services to children and their families or help them to link with needed services already provided in the community. Service provision and linkage are essential parts of the jobs of health and social services coordinators, parent-community coordinators, family liaisons, social workers, and guidance counselors, to name a few. As a central public institution of the urban community, schools play a critical role in ensuring the well-being of children and youth. Schools are not alone in their responsibility—parents, elected officials, and public and private agencies in the city must all play a role. As the African proverb so famously says: “It takes a whole village to raise a child.”

➤ The City of Newark compared poorly with the state on five critical indicators of child and youth well-being. We did, however, find some real improvement in all of these indicators. The Newark teen death rate declined between 1997 and 2001, but was still more than triple that of the state. Similarly, despite a striking decline in child abuse and neglect, there were 789 substantiated cases in 2002, or nine per 1,000 children, almost triple the state-wide rate. Births to younger teens, although relatively rare at only 2.3 per 1,000, are more than four times more common in Newark than throughout the state.

School Safety. For many years, federal law has required every school and district to report the violence and vandalism that occur in schools. The New Jersey Department of Education compiles annual counts and reports them publicly. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) specified a standard of safety beyond which schools are defined as “persistently dangerous.” Under the “Unsafe School Choice Option,” the law provides that families of children who are victims of violence or who go to a persistently dangerous school may choose to send their child to another public school in the district or a charter school in the same city.

Children and youth who are physically, socially, and emotionally healthy are better able to learn at school.

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FIGURE | 3.14

Child and Youth Well-Being Indicators: Newark and New Jersey, 1997–2002

Indicator	Time Period	Newark				New Jersey	
		Time 1		Time 2		Time 1	Time 2
		NUMBER	PER 1,000	NUMBER	PER 1,000	PER 1,000	PER 1,000
Child Death	1997-2001	36	0.6	14	0.2	0.2	0.1
Teen Death	1997-2001	28	1.3	21	1.0	0.4	0.3
Births to Teens (10–14)	1998-2002	25	2.4	24	2.3	0.6	0.5
Births to Teens (15–19)	1998-2002	866	83.9	648	62.8	34.1	28.8
Child Abuse and Neglect	1998-2002	1443	16.4	789	9.0	4.2	3.4

SOURCE | New Jersey Center for Health Statistics, 1998–2002; 2000 US Census; Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2004 Kids Count; Association for Children of New Jersey, 1997–2002 Kids Count

The New Jersey Department of Education considers how many violent and disruptive incidents occur over a three-year period to identify persistently dangerous schools. There are two types of incidents counted. They are:

- 1) *Category A Offenses*: firearm offenses; aggravated assaults on another student; assaults with a weapon on another student; and assaults on a school district staff member.
- 2) *Category B Offenses*: simple assault; weapons possession or sales (other than a firearm); gang fight; robbery or extortion; sex offense; terroristic threat; arson; sales or distribution of drugs; and harassment and bullying.

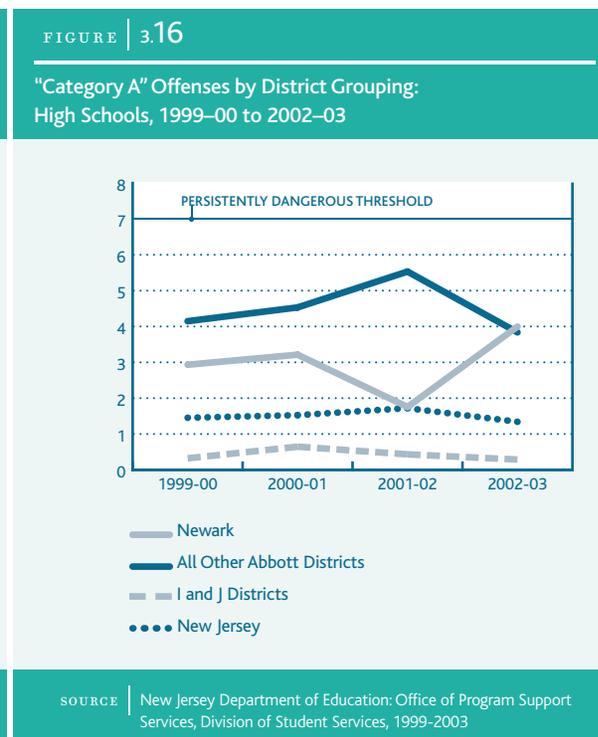
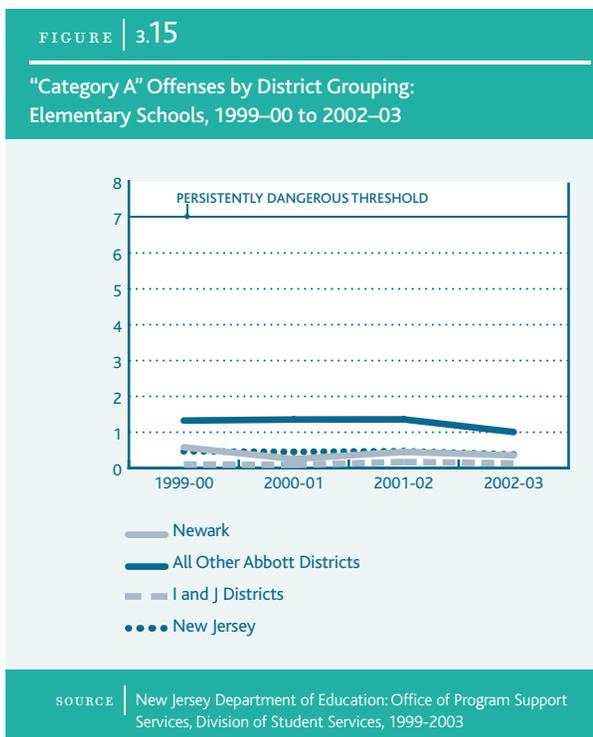
The persistently dangerous classification has been roundly criticized by many camps and on many grounds. The most important criticisms, for the purposes of this report, are related to reporting accuracy. Our first concern is the likelihood of under-reporting by schools and districts. Principals and superintendents who abide to the letter of the law feel that they are unfairly penalized while schools and districts that “fluff” their reports are not. We suspect that such “fluffing” is fairly widespread in New Jersey, considering the critical importance of school safety to parents

and children and the attention given to the annual publication of such incidents. Under newly adopted regulations, school districts have the power to penalize any employee who knowingly falsifies incident reports.¹¹ The new regulations do not outline what powers the New Jersey Department of Education has to penalize school districts that knowingly falsify reports.

➤ None of Newark’s schools qualified as persistently dangerous because of the number of Category A or Category B incidents.

Student Achievement. In New Jersey, the fourth grade test is called the ASK4 (Assessment of Skills and Knowledge). It is essentially the same test as the former ESPA (Elementary School Proficiency Assessment). The 8th grade test is called the GEPA (Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment). The 11th grade test is the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA). Before 2001–02 high school students took a different test called the HSPT (High School Proficiency Test).

There are many ways to examine achievement test results; each way tells a part of

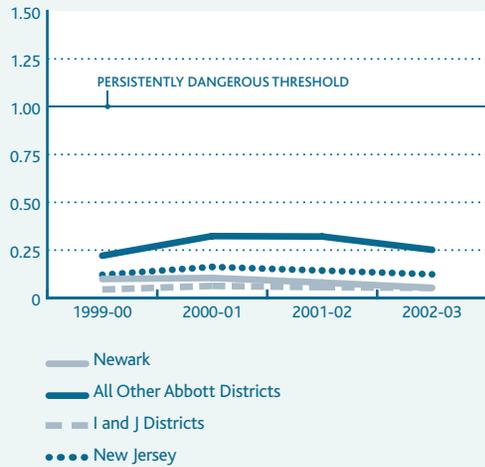


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K-12 Education

FIGURE | 3.17

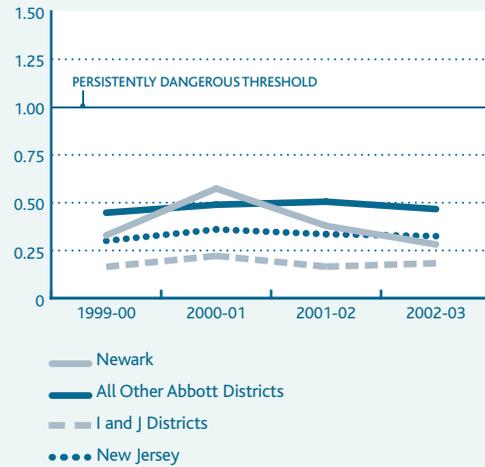
NCLB (Category B) Index by District Grouping: Elementary Schools, 1999-00 to 2002-03



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Program Support Services, Division of Student Services, 1999-2003

FIGURE | 3.18

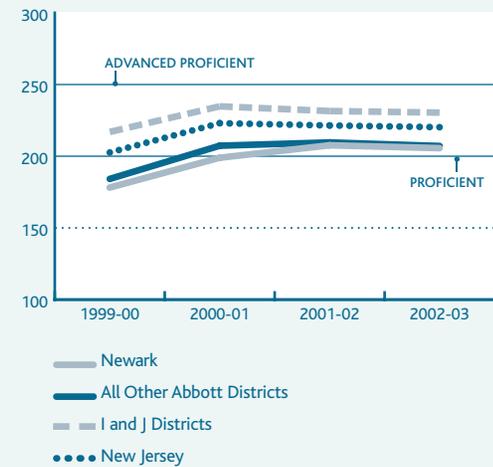
NCLB (Category B) Index by District Grouping: High Schools, 1999-00 to 2002-03



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Program Support Services, Division of Student Services, 1999-2003

FIGURE | 3.19

Grade 4 Language Arts Literacy Score by District Grouping, 1999-00 to 2002-03



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Assessment and Evaluation, 1999-00 to 2002-03; School Report Card, 1999-00 to 2002-03

the story. *Proficiency percentages* tell us how many students met standards for their grade level, but do not tell us about small or large changes that did not cross the state's official proficiency cutpoints. *Average test scores* show changes that may not register in a proficiency analysis, but do not tell us how many students met the state's standards.

Below, we present proficiency percentages and average scale scores for the language arts literacy and math tests at Grades 4, 8, and 11, respectively. First, we compare average scores over time for general education students in Newark, all other Abbott Districts, the wealthiest (I and J) districts in the state, and the state overall. Second, we show the percent of Newark's general education students scoring within the three proficiency categories over time. Finally, in recognition that district averages may mask important differences between schools, we highlight schools that did well on each test and schools that improved the most over time.¹²

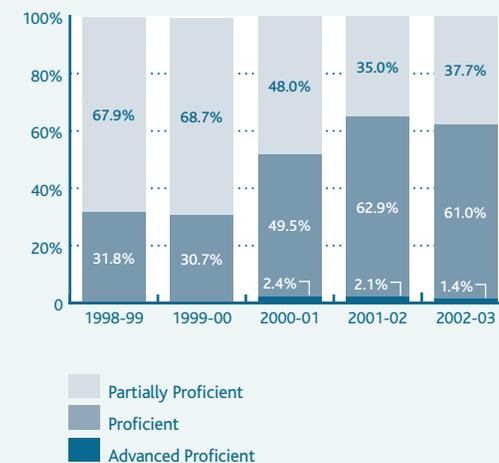
➤ Newark's fourth graders have made gains in language arts over the past several years. Newark's general education scores rose most

dramatically in 2000–01, as did the scores in many districts throughout the state, and stayed at about the same level through 2002–03.

- In 1998–99, only 32 percent of Newark's fourth graders met state standards in language arts literacy, compared to 62 percent in 2002–03. Most of the improvement in Newark occurred in 2000–01 as it did across the state, but it has been sustained through 2002–03
- Grade 4 math scores also improved over time. Newark's math scores improved from 186 in 1999–00 to 201 in 2002–03. The fourth graders in the other Abbott districts scored slightly higher over time. Grade 4 math scores throughout the state and in the wealthiest districts were higher, but improved less.
- More Newark students scored at least proficient on the Grade 4 math test with each passing year. In 1998–99, 29 percent of general education students met the state's math standards compared to almost half (48%) in 2002–03. About 16 percent of Newark's fourth grade students scored in the advanced proficient range in 2002–03 compared to just six percent in 1998–99.
- There was a great deal of variation among the schools on the Grade 4 language arts literacy test. Newark's eight highest performing schools surpassed the state average (86%): Branch Brook, Abington Avenue, Ann Street, First Avenue, Ridge Street, Lafayette Street, Wilson Avenue, and Fourteenth Avenue Schools.
- On the other hand, in four schools, fewer than 40 percent of the general education students

FIGURE | 3.20

Grade 4 Language Arts Literacy Proficiency:
Newark, 1998–99 to 2002–03



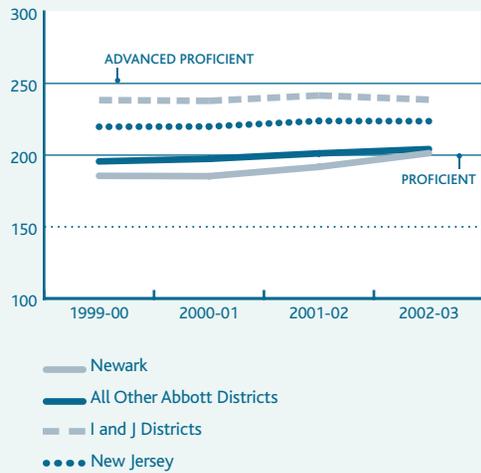
SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Assessment and Evaluation, 1999–00 to 2002–03; School Report Card, 1999–00 to 2002–03

3

K-12 Education

FIGURE | 3.21

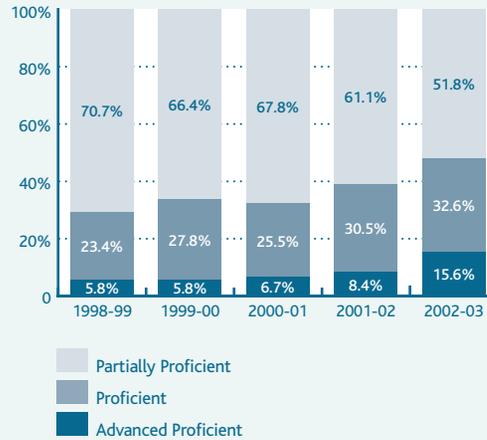
Grade 4 Math Average Score by District Grouping 1999–00 to 2002–03



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Assessment and Evaluation, 1999-00 to 2002-03; School Report Card, 1999-00 to 2002-03

FIGURE | 3.22

Grade 4 Math Proficiency: Newark, 1998–99 to 2002–03

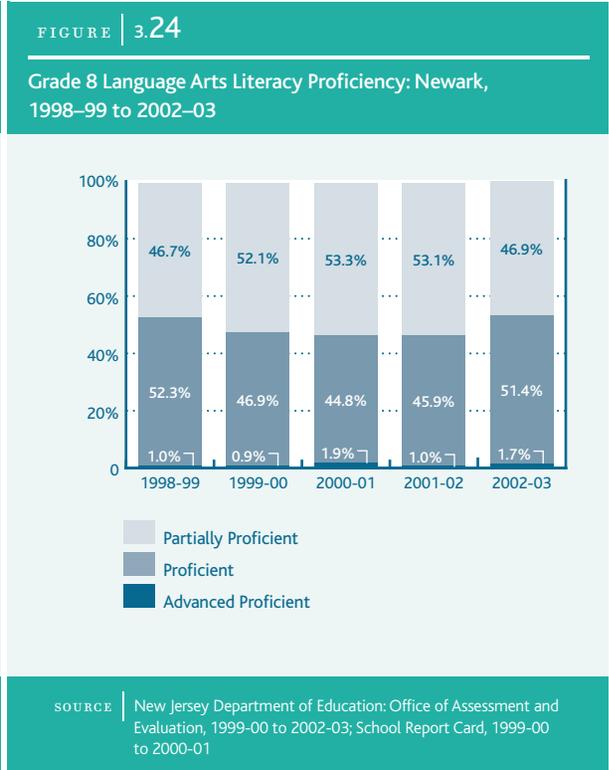
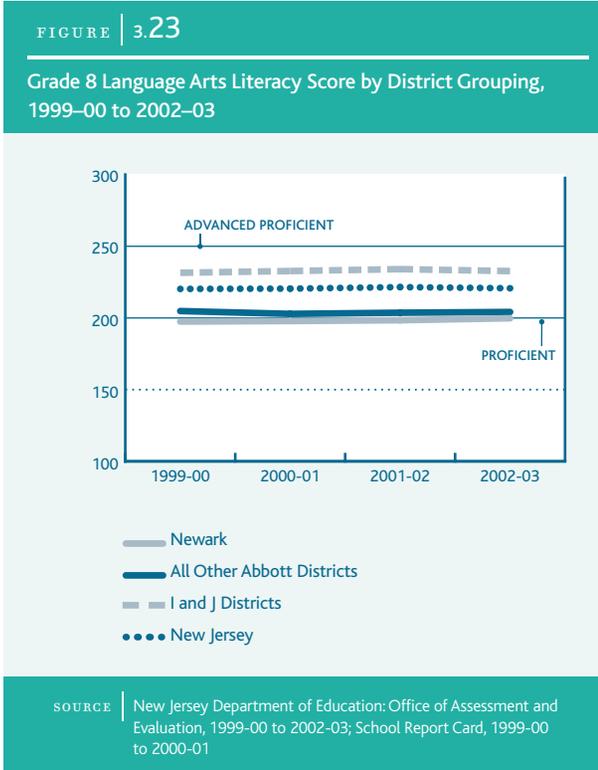


SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Assessment and Evaluation, 1999-00 to 2002-03; School Report Card, 1999-00 to 2002-03

scored at least proficient on the same test: Dayton Street, Bragaw Avenue, Hawthorne Avenue, and Avon Avenue Schools.

- Improvement over time is, of course, an important indicator that a school is moving in the right direction: Five schools showed a 40-point gain in the average score of general education students between 1999–00 and 2002–03: Rafael Hernandez, Quitman Street, Hawkins Street, Miller Street, and Speedway Avenue.
- Newark schools also varied widely in the performance of their general education students on the Grade 4 math test. Newark’s eight highest performing schools did even better than the state average (75%): Branch Brook, Abington Avenue, Ann Street, Lafayette Street, Ridge Street, Oliver Street, First Avenue, and Fourteenth Avenue Elementary Schools.
- In 23 Newark elementary schools, fewer than 40 percent of the general education students met or exceeded the state standards on the Grade 4 math test. Fewer than one in four general education students scored at least proficient in nine schools: Maple Avenue, Camden Street, Hawthorne Avenue, Dayton Street, Sussex Avenue, Belmont-Runyon, Avon Avenue, Bragaw Avenue, and Thirteenth Avenue Elementary Schools.
- With respect to improvement over time, seven schools stand out: Fifteenth Avenue, Speedway Avenue, Hawkins Street, Lafayette Street, Alexander Street, Roseville Avenue, and Cleveland Elementary Schools. They showed the biggest gains on the Grade 4 math test between 1999–00 and 2002–03.

- When compared to the array of instructional programs and reforms for elementary school students, Abbott has yet to provide for students in the middle and high school grades. Overall, Grade 8 average scores and proficiency percentages have remained stable, although lower than throughout the state on average.
- Performance on the Grade 8 language arts literacy test varied widely among Newark's schools. Newark's seven highest performers did better than the state average (85%): At two, every general education student who took the test that year scored proficient or better: University High School and Abington Avenue Elementary School. The five other highest performing schools were First Avenue, Thirteenth Avenue, Ann Street, Wilson Avenue, and Lafayette Street Elementary Schools.
- On the Grade 8 math test, seven Newark schools did better than the state average (66%): Abington Avenue, Wilson Avenue, Ann Street, Thirteenth Avenue, and Lafayette Street Elementary Schools; Luis Muñoz Marin Middle School; and University High School.
- Fewer than 40 percent met or exceeded the state standards on the Grade 8 language arts literacy test in 10 schools: Dr. E. Alma Flagg, South Seventeenth Street, Burnet Street, Martin Luther King Jr., Avon Avenue, Louise Spencer, and George Washington Carver Elementary Schools; Vailsburg Middle School; William H. Brown Academy; and the Renaissance Academy Alternative Program.

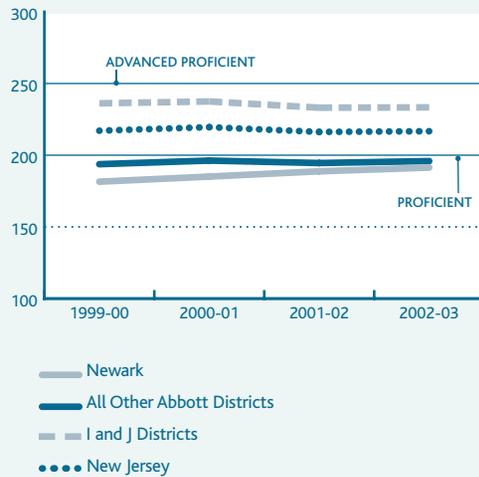


3

K-12 Education

FIGURE | 3.25

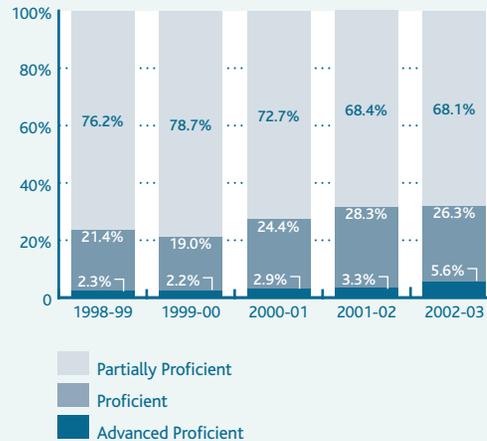
Grade 8 Math Average Score by District Grouping, 1999–00 to 2002–03



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Assessment and Evaluation

FIGURE | 3.26

Grade 8 Math Proficiency: Newark, 1998–99 to 2002–03

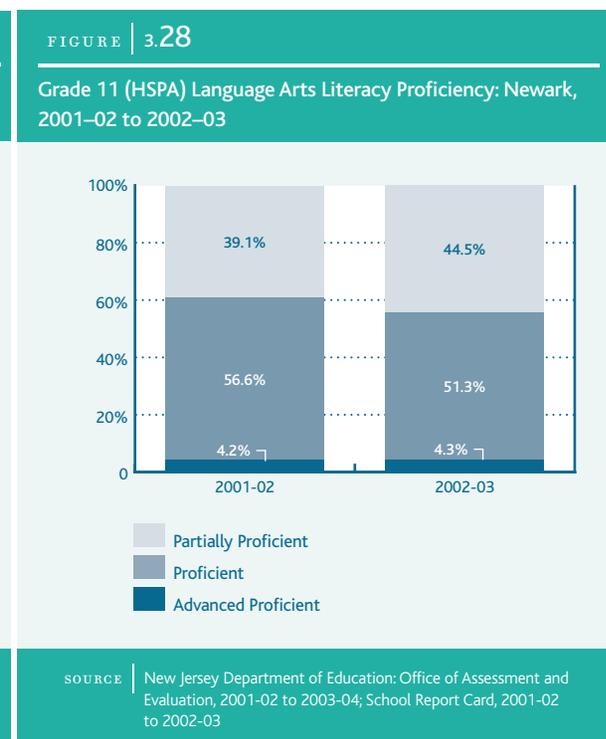
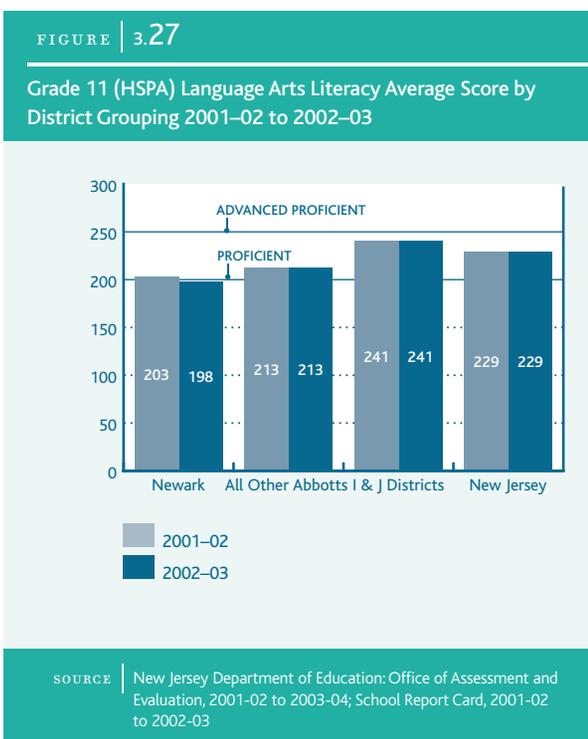


SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Assessment and Evaluation, 1999–00 to 2002–03; School Report Card, 1999–00 to 2000–01

- At five schools, fewer than one in 10 general education students scored proficient on the Grade 8 math test: Avon Avenue, Martin Luther King Jr., and George Washington Carver Elementary Schools; William H. Brown Academy; and Renaissance Academy Alternative Program.
- Thirteenth Avenue Elementary School and Luis Muñoz Marin Middle School showed the biggest gains on both Grade 8 tests from 1999–00 to 2002–03. On the language arts test, Sussex Avenue and Warren Street Elementary Schools and University High School also improved the average score by 15 or more points. On the math test, six schools improved by 20 or more points: Thirteenth Avenue, Abington Avenue, Miller Street, Wilson Avenue, Sussex Avenue, and First Avenue Elementary Schools and Luis Marin Muñoz Middle School.
- On average, Newark’s Grade 11 language arts literacy scores were at the proficiency level in 2001–02 and 2002–03 with more than half of the district’s 11th graders in general education scoring at least proficient. Districtwide, Grade 11 math scores remained below the proficiency level, with about 30 percent meeting state standards. Like the nationwide stagnation in Grade 11 test scores, these are probably the result of our relative lack of attention to reforming high schools in New Jersey. Until recently, the Abbott remedies have provided less in the way of real instructional reforms at the middle or high school levels when compared to what has been available for younger children.

- General education students at Science and University High Schools were the highest performers on the Grade 11 exams. Students at Arts and Technology High Schools also performed well.
- Fewer than two in five eleventh graders scored at least proficient in language arts literacy at Weequahic, Malcolm X. Shabazz, and Barringer High Schools; and Renaissance Academy Alternative Program.
- West Kinney and East Side High Schools showed the greatest gains on the Grade 11 language arts literacy test from 2001–02 to 2002–03.
- On the Grade 11 math test, fewer than one in 10 general education students scored at least proficient at Malcolm X. Shabazz, Weequahic, and Barringer High Schools; and West Kinney Alternative High School. Grade 11 math scores improved between 2001-02 and 2002-03 at one school in Newark: East Side High School.

High School Completion. High school completion is an important event that greatly affects young people’s chances for social and economic improvement. Because of this, and because it is the culmination of a school system’s responsibilities to its community’s residents, graduation is a major indicator of educational success. In New Jersey, there

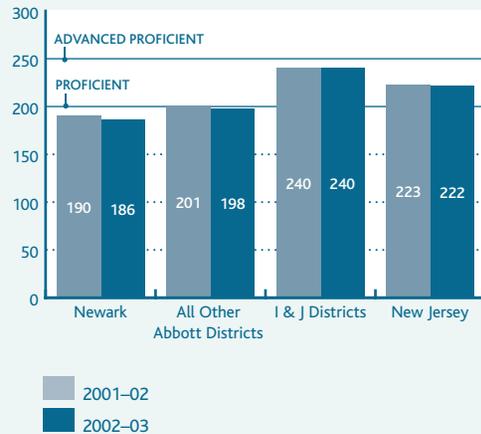


3

K-12 Education

FIGURE | 3.29

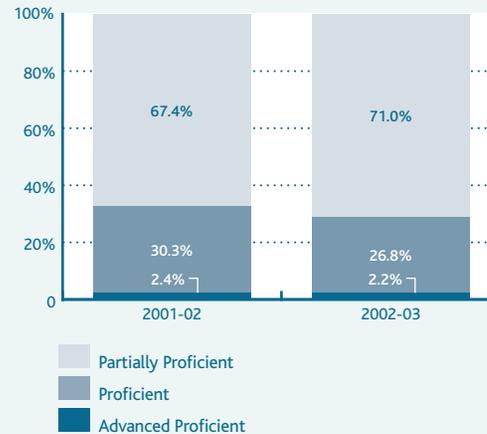
Grade 11 (HSPA) Math Average Score by District Grouping, 2001–02 to 2002–03



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Assessment and Evaluation, 2001–02 to 2003–04; School Report Card, 2001–02 to 2002–03

FIGURE | 3.30

Grade 11 (HSPA) Math Proficiency: Newark, 2001–02 to 2002–03



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Assessment and Evaluation, 2001–02 to 2003–04; School Report Card, 2001–02 to 2002–03

was no official way to estimate graduation rates until recently. We estimated historical graduation rates using a cumulative promotion index.

➤ According to our estimate, 72 percent of Newark’s class of 2001–02 graduated from school. The district’s promotion index improved from a low of 47 percent seven years earlier. By this measure, high schools across the state graduate about 80 percent of their students and the wealthiest districts have graduated about 90 percent. The other Abbott districts graduated about 55 percent in 1994–95 but that figure rose to about 59 percent in 2001–02. More needs to be done to assess the true graduation rates in New Jersey high schools.

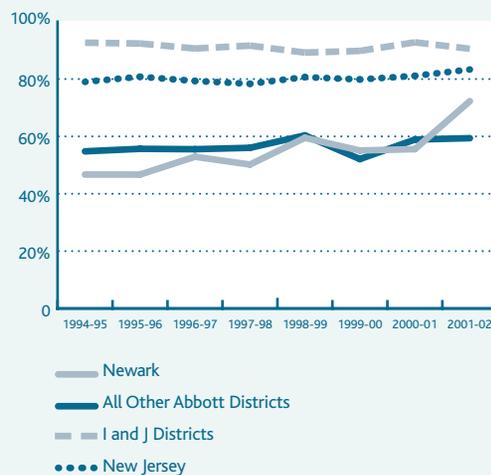
Routes to Graduation. High school achievement tests assess if students have mastered the content and skills outlined in New Jersey’s Core Curriculum Content Standards. Before 2001–02, it was assumed that graduating general education students mastered the content standards and passed the traditional Grade 11 exam. Since then, New Jersey high school students who fail one or more sections of the traditional exam can still earn a standard, academic diploma if

they take and pass the alternative exam, the Special Review Assessment (SRA). People disagree about alternative routes to graduation like the SRA. Critics argue that students must show that they have mastered curriculum standards to graduate from high school. Supporters praise New Jersey's SRA and argue that states with a single, high-stakes graduation test have a strong incentive to push the students out of school who cannot pass the test. We believe that the people of New Jersey can do both: maintain high academic standards and make sure that all students have the opportunity to earn academic diplomas.

➤ In Newark and the other Abbott districts, the percentage of students who graduated by passing the traditional Grade 11 exam decreased since 1994–95. In Newark, 69 percent of the class of 1994–95 graduated after passing the traditional exam. By 2002–03, only about 31 percent graduated this way. Although fewer students are graduating by passing the traditional test, the graduation estimates we discussed above suggest that more students are graduating from Newark's high schools.

FIGURE | 3.31

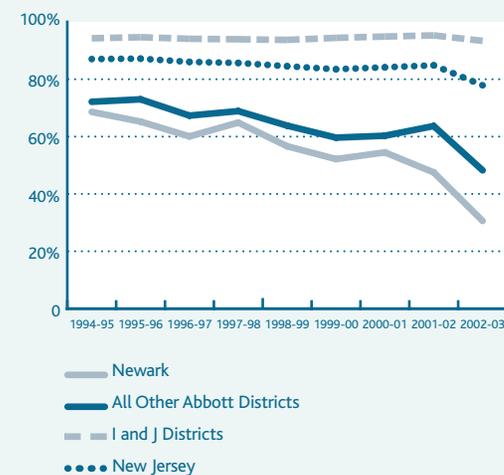
Cumulative Promotion Index by District Grouping, 1996–97 to 2001–02



SOURCE | School Report Card, 1994–95 to 2002–03

FIGURE | 3.32

Graduation by Traditional Grade 11 Exam by District Grouping, 1994–95 to 2002–03



SOURCE | School Report Card, 1994–95 to 2002–03

3

K-12 Education

FIGURE | 3.33

Summary Table. Abbott K-12 Programs: Benchmark Status In Newark

Benchmark	Status
Kindergarten-Grade 3 maximum class size: 21	Met
Grades 4 and 5 maximum class size: 23	Met
Grades 6 through 12 maximum class size: 24	Met
Abbott districts have funding parity with the I & J districts	Met
2003-04 Grade 4 Achievement Tests*: For a school to make Adequate Yearly Progress, each of 10 demographic subgroups had to have: 1) 95% test participation; 2) 68% percent score at least proficient in language arts literacy; AND 3) 53% score at least proficient in math.	Met in: Belmont Runyon Burnet Street Camden Street Chancellor Avenue Dr. E. Alma Flagg Franklin Maple Avenue McKinley
2003-04 Grade 8 Achievement Tests: For a school to make Adequate Yearly Progress, each of 10 demographic subgroups had to have: 1) 95% test participation; 2) 58% score at least proficient in language arts literacy; AND 3) 39% score at least proficient in math.	Met in: Luis Munoz Marin Middle Harold Wilson Louise A. Spencer
2003-04 Grade 11 Achievement Tests: For a school to make Adequate Yearly Progress, each of 10 demographic subgroups had to have: 1) 95% test participation; 2) 73% score at least proficient in language arts literacy; AND 3) 55% score at least proficient in math.	Not Met
Student to computer ratio is 5 to 1	Met
To avoid being considered "persistently dangerous", schools must have an average of less than 7 or more Category "A" offenses for three consecutive years.	Elementary School: Met Secondary School: Met
To avoid being considered "persistently dangerous" schools must have an NCLB (Category B) Index rating less than 1.	Elementary School: Met Secondary School: Met

* The New Jersey Department of Education provided 2003-04 Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) data several months prior to releasing statewide 2003-04 achievement test scores. Therefore, we include the 2003-04 AYP data to provide readers with the most updated information available, while achievement test score data is only analyzed through 2002-03.

Endnotes

9. We focus on general education funding as the foundation of a school district's budget. Most school districts also receive categorical aid from the federal and/or state governments to fund supportive programs and services for students with disabilities, English language learners, and other special needs populations.

10. As of school year 2004-05, Abbott Parity Aid is known as Educational Opportunity Aid (EOA) and Additional Abbott Aid is known as Discretionary Educational Opportunity Aid (DEOA).

11. The newly adopted regulation guiding penalizing school employees who falsify violence and vandalism incident reports is New Jersey Administrative Code 6:16, Section 5.3.

12. Here, a school is identified as a high performer if its general education students met or exceeded the proficiency threshold set by the New Jersey Department of Education in compliance with the "adequate yearly progress" provision of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Many of New Jersey's urban schools are unsafe, overcrowded, and unsuitable for helping students to achieve the Core Curriculum Content Standards. Under Abbott, the state is required to address this situation. In 2000, the legislature enacted the Abbott School Facilities Construction Program with several key features.



4

School Facilities Construction

The LRF process was a unique chance for school districts to assess their existing schools and, where needed, plan to build better ones that would accommodate children's needs and improved instructional practices.

The key features include:

- Priority to health and safety repairs;
- Long range plans developed by districts with community partners;
- More classrooms to eliminate overcrowding;
- Space to provide preschool to all eligible three- and four-year-olds;
- 100 percent state-financed for approved costs; and
- Schools to accommodate state-of-the-art teaching and learning.

The First-Round Long-Range Facilities Plans

The first step of the Abbott school facilities construction program was to develop a districtwide Long-Range Facilities Plan (known then as a Facilities Management Plan). The New Jersey Department of Education issued guidelines in September 1998 to help Abbott districts develop them. Districts' final plans were initially due to the state just four months later in January 1999. This deadline was later extended to March 1999. The Newark Public Schools advised the New Jersey Department of Education that they would submit their plan in July 1999 because of delays caused by technical problems with the software system

developed by the Department of Education to input project data. LRF development involved several procedures, including:

- Projecting future enrollments;
- Assessing the safety and educational adequacy of current schools;
- Planning future educational needs, with a set minimum standards as a guideline;
- Engaging parents and other community members in the process; and
- Planning for "swing space" while construction is under way.¹³

The LRF process was a unique chance for school districts to assess their existing schools and, where needed, plan to build better ones that would accommodate children's needs and improved instructional practices. The development of the first-round LRFs did not go very smoothly for a number of reasons. Most districts did not have time to assess their current educational programs. They also did not have the expertise to translate educational practices into new building designs.

- Newark's first-round long-range plan included a total of 69 projects. Forty-three of the original projects were to be new schools; the remaining projects were renovations or additions to existing schools.

- Newark was the first district to complete its own evaluation of 90 community preschool provider facilities. In light of the district's recent evaluation, provider building quality should be addressed during the upcoming, second-round planning process.

Leadership

Facilities Advisory Board. Each Abbott district was required by the New Jersey Department of Education's guidelines to assemble a facilities advisory board (FAB) to guide the development of the LRFP. The board was to include parents, teachers, principals, community representatives, an architect, an engineer, and a staff person from the New Jersey Department of Education. The FAB's role was to review and refine the recommendations made by an educational facilities specialist and architect and recommend the plan for adoption by the school board. The Education Law Center has recommended that FABs continue to meet until plans are fully implemented to seek input and guide the district-wide planning, design, and construction of school facilities.

- The Newark Facilities Advisory Board (FAB) was made up of the Facilities Consultant/Architect,

district and school administrators, teachers, parents; and representatives from city government and community-based organizations. The FAB met monthly to provide oversight until May 1999 when its members approved the LRFP and submitted it to the New Jersey Department of Education. The FAB was re-established in September 2004 as the Facilities Oversight Committee in preparation for the second round of facilities planning in 2005. The facilities committee on the district's Advisory Board meets monthly with the district's Facilities Consultant to discuss the status of ongoing projects, in particular, problems that have prevented some projects from moving forward.

Progress and Challenges

Progress. The first LRFPs in the state were approved by the New Jersey Department of Education in 2000; the most pressing health and safety projects got seriously underway after Governor McGreevey created a new state agency, the New Jersey Schools Construction Corporation (SCC), to oversee the whole process in 2002.¹⁴⁻¹⁵

For Abbott districts, LRFPs were developed and approved by their school boards, and then submitted to and approved by the New Jersey Department of Education. Once LRFPs are ap-

FIGURE | 4.1

Newark's First-Round Facilities Plan Overview

	PROJECTS	
	Number	Percent
New Schools	43	62.3%
Renovations/Additions	18	26.1%
Additions	8	11.6%
Total	69	100.0%

SOURCE | Education Law Center communications with the School Construction Corporation, New Jersey Department of Education, and individual districts.

4

School Facilities Construction

FIGURE | 4.2

Overview of Newark's Current Projects

School	Type and Estimated Completion	School	Type and Estimated Completion
Central H.S.	New School (January 2006)	Camden Campus - Middle	Rehab (-)
Science Park H.S.	New School (January 2006)	Camden Campus - Primary	New School (-)
Gladys Hillman-Jones	Addition/Rehab (January 2007)	Chancellor Avenue	New School (-)
Ann Street PreK-8	New School (September 2007)	Dr. E. Alma Flagg	Addition/Rehab (-)
First Avenue E.S.	New School (September 2007)	Dr. M. L. King, Jr.	New School (-)
Harold Wilson	New School (September 2007)	Dr. William Horton	New School (-)
North Ward Park E.S.	New School (September 2007)	East Side H.S.	New School (-)
Oliver 3-8	New School (September 2007)	Elliott Street	New School (-)
Ridge Street E.S.	New School (September 2007)	George W. Carver/Bruce Street	Addition/Rehab (-)
Speedway Ave E.S.	New School (September 2007)	Hawthorne/Bragaw	New School (-)
Franklin PreK-4	New School (January 2008)	Lafayette Street	New School (-)
Hernandez PreK-4	New School (January 2008)	Lincoln E.S.	New School (-)
South Street PreK-2	New School (January 2008)	Madison	New School (-)
Harriet Tubman	New School (September 2008)	Maple Avenue	New School (-)
University H.S.	New School (September 2008)	Miller Street	New School (-)
West Side H.S.(2 phases)	Addition/Rehab (September 2008)	Mount Vernon	Addition/Rehab (-)
Hawkins E.S.	New School (September 2009)	North 12th Street	New School (-)
14th/15th Avenue	New School (-)	Peshine Avenue	New School (-)
Abington Avenue	New School (-)	New East Ward PreK-8	New School (-)
Arts H.S.	Addition/Rehab (-)	Roberto Clemente	New School (-)
Avon Avenue	New School (-)	South Seventeenth Street	New School (-)
Barringer H.S.	Addition/Rehab (-)	Sussex Avenue	Addition/Rehab (-)
Boylan/Alexander E.S.	New School (-)	Technology H.S.	Addition/Rehab (-)
Branch Brook	New School (-)	Vailsburg	Addition/Rehab (-)
Broadway/Luis Munoz Marin	Addition/Rehab (-)	W. H. Brown Academy	New School (-)
Burnet/Warren E.S.	New School (-)	Weequahic H.S.	Addition/Rehab (-)
Camden Campus - Elementary	Rehab (-)	Wilson Avenue E.S.	New School (-)

SOURCE | Education Law Center communications with the School Construction Corporation, New Jersey Department of Education, and individual districts.
 - = Estimated completion date unknown.

proved, districts prioritize projects and submit them one by one to the New Jersey Department of Education. The Department of Education checks each project for compliance with the approved LRFP and estimates project costs.

From the outset, all parties acknowledged that the Abbott school construction program would be a vast undertaking. As with any effort this size, it will take a long time. Many schools operate year-round and the district must have the space to provide an adequate educational program while facilities projects proceed. Even though the state finances and oversees the process, the district must take great care in pacing the submission of its projects and moving them through the pipeline to completion.

- As of September 2004, 54 of Newark's 64 school construction projects were in the pipeline toward completion, with two in construction and none yet complete.¹⁶
- The district has good, collaborative relationships with many community-based organizations and City Hall around facilities planning and development.

Challenges. There are many ways for a school construction project to get hung up on its way to completion. The New Jersey Department of Education and the district may disagree about spaces, forcing a prolonged series of negotiations. The SCC may determine, as a result of its own review, that the district should build a new school rather than renovate the existing one. The school district may have difficulty getting the land needed to build new schools.

- The Newark Public Schools has had a difficult time acquiring sites for its school projects because of land shortages, rising prices, competition from private real estate development, and environmental problems.
- The district’s project management firm (PMF) has reached the maximum capacity of projects allowed under the current contract. Under original rules, this would mean that the district could not proceed with new construction projects until a new contract was set up with the firm. These rules may be revised as the SCC approaches the second round of contracts for PMFs.

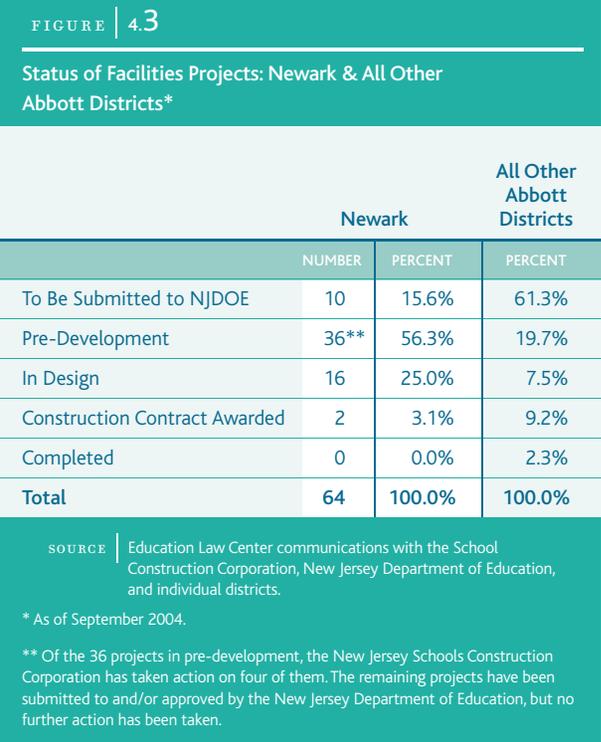
Endnotes

13. Planning for swing space was not part of the original LRFP.

14. Abbott districts were required to address emergency school facilities defects which would directly affect the “health and safety” of children in these buildings. Health and safety projects include: roof repairs, window replacement, asbestos removal, and boiler repairs.

15. The SCC is a quasi-public agency housed within the New Jersey Economic Development Authority.

16 Thirty-two projects have been submitted to and/or approved by the New Jersey Department of Education but no further action has been taken.



Next Steps for Education Stakeholders

Next Steps for Education Stakeholders

- **Read the report.** Try to make the time to read the whole technical report: it contains a lot of useful context and information. It is available on the Education Law Center website: www.edlawcenter.org.
- **Talk about what you learned.** Discuss what you read with your friends, family, congregation members, and work colleagues.
- **Dig deeper.** Ask why and how. If you read about something that pleases or concerns you, learn more about why and how it came to be that way. Ask about quality. The indicators may tell you that a program or practice exists but not how well it is being implemented.
- **Look at other sources of information.** The Abbott Indicators are comprehensive, but not exhaustive. Other sources of information will be needed to get a clear idea of what the schools are doing. For example, low-performing Abbott schools are required to undergo an external review process called Collaborative Assessment and Planning for Achievement (CAPA). If your school had a CAPA review, you can read the resulting report.
- **Look for meeting announcements.** Look for events and meetings where other people in your community will be discussing this report in particular or school improvement in general. You can find out about them on local television stations and in local newspapers.
- **Take part.** Attend local meetings and engage in conversations about what you learned with your neighbors, school and district staff, and your school board members.
- **Push for solutions.** Remember the goal is to support school improvement. It is not enough to identify strengths and weaknesses. Once you talk about the findings with your neighbors, decide what needs to be done and help make sure that it happens.
- **Stay involved.** School improvement is a multi-year investment. It will take your continued commitment.

Abbott Indicators List

The following is the list of Abbott indicators in the technical version of the report. The indicators included in this summary report are highlighted in bold. Findings from all indicators are included wherever they were available and of sufficient quality.

The Community and Students

What conditions of living and learning in the community served by the district might affect children's and youth's readiness to learn?

- **Female-headed households with children**
- **Adult educational attainment**
- **Labor force participation**
- **Unemployment rate**
- **Median household income**
- **People living below poverty level**
- **Children living below poverty level**
- **Foreign-born population**
- **Rent-income ratio**
- **Vacant housing**
- **Violent crimes**

What student characteristics might affect the nature and extent of services offered by the district?

- **Eligibility free-/reduced-price lunch**
- **Race/ethnicity**
- **English language learners**
- **Students with disabilities**
- **Immigrant students**
- **Homelessness**
- **Student mobility rate**

The Preschool Program

Opportunities for Students to Learn

How close is the district to achieving universal enrollment for all three- and four-year-olds?

- **Percent of preschool universe served (Census/ASSA)**
- **Total preschool population served**
- **Number of providers by type**
- **Waiting list**
- **Head Start inclusion**
- **Outreach activities**
- **Identification of unserved families**

Is the district providing a "high-quality" preschool education to all eligible children?

- **Programs for children with disabilities**
 - Preschool Child Study Team (CST)
- **Curriculum development**
 - **Curricula used**
 - People involved
 - Considerations/inputs to adoption
 - Review frequency
 - Alignment to *Expectations*
- **Transition activities (into preschool and Kindergarten)**
 - Health and social services
 - Direct services offered
 - Methods for assessment
 - Referral methods
 - Transportation services
 - **ECERS-R quality scores**

Preschool Teacher Qualifications and Supports

Are preschool programs adequately staffed and are staff adequately supported?

- Number of teachers
- Educational attainment of preschool teachers
- Preschool teacher certification
- Preschool teacher experience
- Preschool teacher salary
- Performance evaluation
- Professional development opportunities
 - Criteria
 - Methods
 - Joint preschool-Kindergarten professional development

Budget

Are the preschool programs adequately funded?

- Preschool revenues

Leadership

To what extent does the district's ECEAC represent its stakeholders and participate in the district's early childhood program planning and decision-making?

- Early Childhood Education Advisory Council (ECEAC)
 - Representation
 - Training
 - Frequency of meetings
 - Involvement in program planning, budgeting, and facilities planning
 - Other activities

Student Outcomes

Have preschool students developed the skills they will need to continue to learn and develop in Kindergarten?

- Assessment methods used
- PPVT-III or ELAS scores

K-12 Education

Opportunities for Student Learning

Do our schools provide high-quality instruction in a range of content areas adequate to ensure that students can meet content standards?

- Whole School Reform
 - Model chosen
 - Approval of model
 - Year adopted
 - Reason for adoption
 - Adoption procedures
 - Class size
 - Programs for children with disabilities
 - Curriculum development
 - Curricula used
 - People involved
 - Considerations/inputs to adoption
 - Review frequency
 - Method for ensuring alignment across grade levels
- College preparatory course
 - AP courses
 - AP course eligibility
 - Availability of college preparatory sequence (math and science)

Abbott Indicators List

Student and Family Supports

Is the school providing programs and services to support students' well-being and academic performance in accordance with demonstrated need?

- Full day Kindergarten
 - Class size
- **Early literacy**
 - **90-minute reading blocks**
 - **Small group/one-on-one tutoring**
- Health and social services
 - Referral and coordination
 - On-site services
- **Nutrition program**
- **Access to technology**
- Student-computer ratio
- **Alternative education program**
- College and work transition programs
 - After-school programs
 - Summer programs
 - Art and Music programs

Are strategies in place to ensure effective parent outreach and involvement?

- Parent involvement policies and practices

Teacher Qualifications and Supports

Are our schools adequately staffed and supported?

- Student-teacher ratio
- Faculty attendance
- **Highly qualified teachers**
- **Abbott staffing patterns**
- Professional development
 - Description of instructionally-linked, curriculum-specific training
 - Inputs to selecting professional development opportunities
 - Performance evaluation criteria and methods
 - Frequency of teacher networking and collaboration
 - Other teacher supports

Budget

Are our schools adequately funded?

- **Property wealth**
- Local tax rates
 - Average tax rates
 - School tax rates
- **General education budget**
- **Supplemental programs budget**
- Additional Abbott Aid application process

Leadership

Do our schools and does our district have adequate and representative leadership?

- **School Leadership Councils**
 - Representation of stakeholder groups
 - Training in roles and responsibilities
 - Frequency of meetings
 - Involvement in planning and budgeting
 - Other activities
- **Abbott Advisory Council**
 - Representation of stakeholder groups
 - Frequency of meetings
 - Involvement in planning and budgeting
 - Other activities

Student Outcomes

How physically, socially, and emotionally healthy are our children?

- **Child death**
- **Teen death**
- **Teen births**
- **Substantiated abuse and neglect cases**
- **School violence and vandalism rates**

Are all students in Kindergarten to grade 12 learning according to statewide standards?

➤ **Student attendance**

➤ Suspension rates

➤ **Grade 4 Language Arts Literacy and Math Assessments**

- Mean scores
- Proficiency percentages
- AYP status

➤ **Grade 8 Language Arts Literacy and Math Assessments**

- Mean scores
- Proficiency percentages
- AYP status

➤ **Grade 11 Language Arts Literacy and Math Assessments**

- Mean scores
- Proficiency percentages
- AYP status

➤ **High and low performing schools**

➤ Kindergarten through grade 2

- Early Language Assessment System scores
- Terra Nova Edition 2, where available

➤ **Graduation**

- Estimated rates (cumulative promotion index)
- Graduation via HSPA
- Graduation via SRA

➤ **College Entrance**

- SAT participation
- Verbal and math mean scores

School Facilities Construction

Healthy, Safe and Educationally Adequate Schools

What are the district's long-range facilities plans?

➤ **LRFP approval status**

➤ **Number and type of planned projects**

➤ **Process of development**

How much progress has been made toward completing educational facilities projects in the districts?

➤ **Plans to upgrade preschool facilities**

➤ Status of projects (complete, construction, design, predevelopment, not yet submitted)

➤ Estimated completion dates

➤ **Cooperation with municipal partners**

➤ **Community input**

➤ **Barriers to progress**

To what extent is there adequate, representative leadership that encourages meaningful public participation for school facilities planning and project implementation?

➤ **Facilities Advisory Board**

- Representation of stakeholder groups
- Frequency of meeting (beyond LRFP submission)
- Involvement in plan development
- Transparency to public
- Other activities

District and Community Reviewer Letters



Marion A. Bolden
State District Superintendent

The Newark Public Schools
Office of The State District Superintendent
2 Cedar Street
Newark, New Jersey 07102-3091
(973) 733-7333
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William L. Librera
Commissioner of Education

April 5, 2005

Mr. David E. Sciarra
Executive Director
Education Law Center
60 Park Place
Suite 300
Newark, New Jersey 07102

Dear Mr. Sciarra:

The Newark Public Schools acknowledges the completion of the *Newark Abbott Indicators Report 2005* by the Education Law Center. This Report informs stakeholders about the status of Abbott reforms, and will certainly engage and encourage the community to respond and support the outcomes achieved thus far. Its findings will have far-reaching implications for the continuous improvement of education for urban school children in New Jersey.

At the time of the report, New Jersey student achievement data for the 2003 – 2004 school year had not been released and thus could not be included for analysis. We believe these data provide a longitudinal look at the positive outcomes of Abbott reforms especially preschool, which is one of the hallmarks of the Abbott decision. The 2004 data contains within its population the first wave of students who entered Abbott preschool programs who were then in grade 4.

The Newark Public Schools asks that these data be included in the Appendix, which is to be released to the public. Enclosed are the Newark Public School NJ Assessment of Skills and Knowledge for grades 3 and 4, Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment, and High School Proficiency Assessment results for 2004. These results demonstrate the progress our students are making to close the achievement gap. These results will motivate the community to hold fast to the course of action set in motion with this landmark decision.

Thank you.

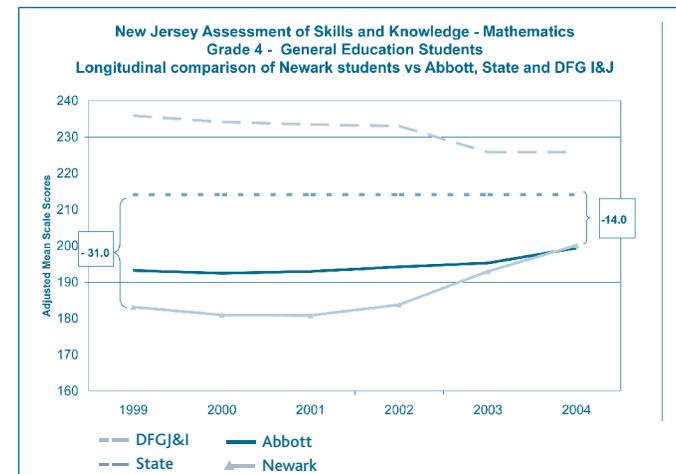
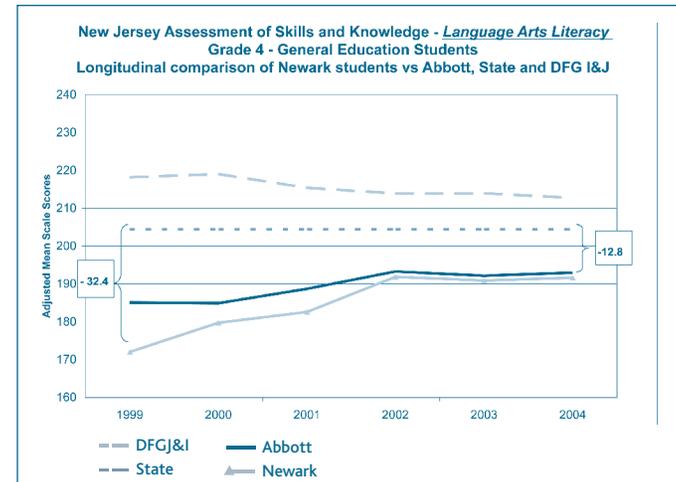
Sincerely,

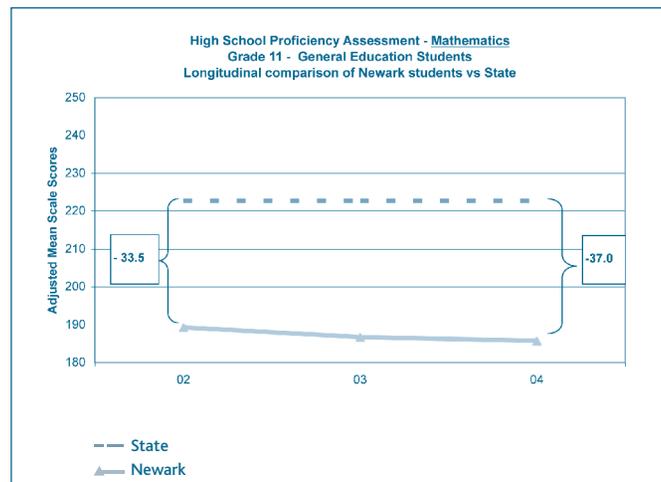
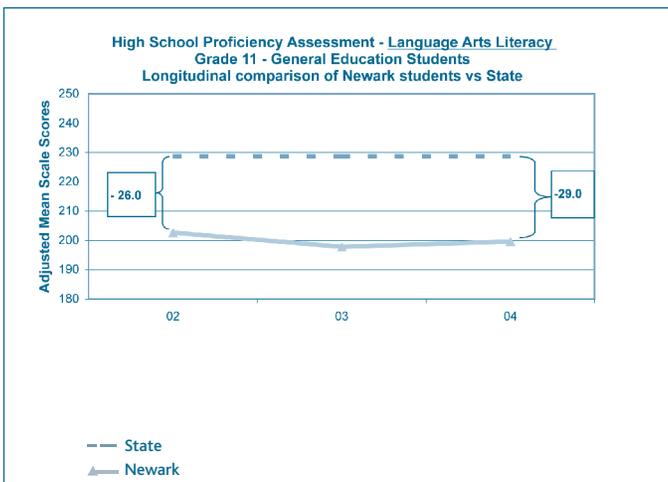
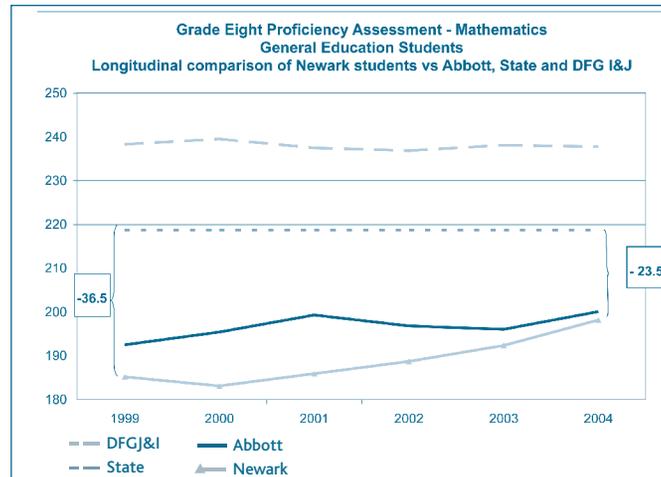
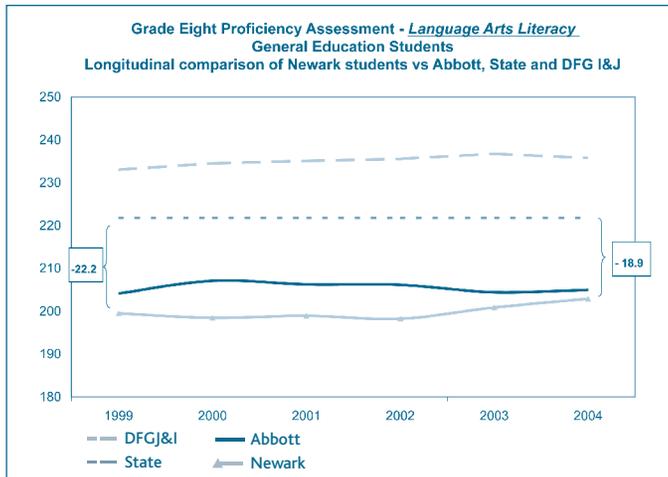
Marion A. Bolden
Superintendent

aas

Enc: Newark Public Schools State Assessment Data

U:MAB/SciarraLetter-AbbottIndicators





Acknowledgements

The Abbott Indicators Reports were created through the efforts of a great many contributors. We list those contributors below, with apologies to the inevitable few whom we inadvertently left out.

This report was written by Lesley Hirsch and Erain Applewhite-Coney, Psy.D, Co-Directors of the Abbott Indicators Project at the Education Law Center. Letitia Logan of the Education Law Center also made significant contributions to the writing.

Erain Applewhite-Coney, Psy.D. conducted the Newark interviews. Lesley Hirsch and Letitia Logan collected and analyzed the data with guidance and assistance from Judith Pollack and Michael Weiss, of Educational Testing Services, Inc.

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Junius Williams, Abbott Leadership Institute

School District Information, Interviews, and Access

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Gayle Griffin, Ph.D., Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning

Anzella Nelms, Deputy Superintendent, Educational Resources

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Program Support Services: Thomas Collins, Ph.D.

Deputy Commissioner

Public Information: Barbara Molnar, Faith Sarafin, and Quansheng Shen

Report Reviewers

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At each pilot site, we provided district staff with the draft report for review and assembled an all-volunteer community review team. All reviewers were invited to recommend changes. We incorporated some of their changes, and invited reviewers to include a list of other changes as an attachment to the report. In Newark, the community-based review team members were as follows:

Marcia Brown, Rutgers University-Newark
Richard Cammarieri, Newark Advisory Board and New Community Corporation
Irene Cooper-Basch, The Victoria Foundation
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Raymond Ocasio, La Casa de Don Pedro
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Cecilia Zalkind, Association for Children of New Jersey

The comprehensiveness and usefulness of this report are testaments to the many contributions listed here. Any errors or omissions are, of course, the full responsibility of the primary authors.

About the Education Law Center

The Education Law Center (ELC) was established in 1973 to advocate on behalf of New Jersey's public school children for access to an equal and adequate education under state and federal laws. ELC works to improve educational opportunities for low-income students and students with disabilities through public education, policy initiatives, research, communications and, when necessary, legal action.

ELC serves as counsel to the plaintiffs in the *Abbott v. Burke* case—more than 300,000 preschool and school-age children in 31 urban school districts throughout New Jersey. Through the *Abbott* decisions, the New Jersey Supreme Court has established an unprecedented legal framework of remedial measures to assure the rights of urban public school children to an adequate education. The remedies ordered by the Court include standards-based education and reform supported

by foundational funding equal to New Jersey's most affluent suburbs; supplemental funding for programs that address the social and health needs of students, whole school reform; school based management; high quality preschool for all three and four year olds; and safe and educationally adequate school facilities. ELC's successes in *Abbott* have resulted in an additional \$800 million in foundational state aid each year for the *Abbott* districts and schools, \$300 million in preschool aid, and \$6 billion in school construction funds. The *New York Times* editorialized that *Abbott* represents "the most important equal education ruling since *Brown v. Board of Education*" (April 30, 2002).

ELC also operates the Student Rights Project (SRP) to protect the educational rights of all students, focusing on students with disabilities. SRP is the only non-profit, legal assistance program in New Jersey that specializes in education law and provides free legal representation to income-eligible parents, guardians and caregivers of students

in disputes involving K-12 public education. Because demand for SRP's services far exceeds attorney resources, SRP gives priority to low-income students who attend school in poor urban or rural districts.

Please direct any questions about this report or the *Abbott* Indicators Project to:

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