

**THE NEW JERSEY STATE CONFERENCE
OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE**
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PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Make the needs of young people and public schools a top priority of President-elect Barack Obama's first 100 days in office and beyond.

A powerful campaign to influence federal education policy has just been launched by The Forum for Education & Democracy, supported by Linda Darling-Hammond, Deborah Meier, Nancy Sizer, Pedro Antonio Noguera, Theodore Sizer, Wendy D. Puriefoy, and other notable public education advocates.

Please take a minute to ensure our new President makes the right choices to invest in and improve public education:

Visit www.willwereally.com to watch the campaign's powerful video, sign the petition, and help turn energy into action. Then, get the word out! As soon as possible, share the campaign's link and information with others through your organization's blog, newsletter, website, listserv, and other media.

The Forum for Education & Democracy, a national education "action tank," is directed by Dr. George Wood, who says, "If you were emboldened by the hopeful energy of the presidential campaign and if you feel anxious about our uncertain future hope you will join a national web-based campaign to make the needs of young people and public schools a top priority of President-elect Barack Obama's first 100 days in office and beyond."

----- THE SCHOOL FUNDING REFORM ACT OF 2008 (SFRA)

What Is It?

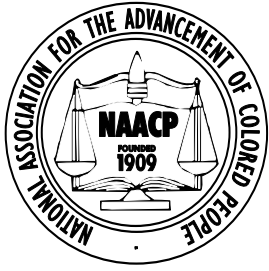
The SFRA is a new law passed by the NJ Legislature in early January 2008 by the slimmest of margins. It determines how much State aid school districts will receive and how that will be calculated. The SFRA ends the Abbott designation created by the NJ Supreme Court in a series of historic decisions (see other side).

The SFRA limits the amount of money NJ school districts can spend on their students – in most cases this number is below (sometimes well below!) that many districts spent in 2007-8.

What's Wrong with It?

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

Abbott districts will no longer receive the same level of per-pupil funding as successful suburban districts. The new, average, per-pupil cost for Abbott districts is almost \$3,000 less than in the 2007-8 school year. Abbott districts will no longer be entitled to needs-based supplemental funding. The accountability process built into Abbott, which requires that money be spent on proven academic programs, is missing from the SFRA.



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The level of State aid directed to many Abbott and other districts won't be enough to cover rising fixed costs or ease pressure on local property tax payers. The successful Abbott preschool program is in jeopardy, so is adequate special education funding. School districts will be forced to make cuts in academic year 2008-9, and BIGGER cuts in the following year and beyond.

What Can Be Done About It?

The NJ Supreme Court must decide if the SFRA provides fair and equitable funding for NJ's urban children. Tell the Court and our legislators NOT to turn back the clock on school funding! JOIN parents, students, education activists and child advocates at the Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex in Trenton, on Monday, September 22, at 9 a.m. for a RALLY and PRESS CONFERENCE in support of Abbott and equitable education funding.

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

What Is Abbott?

In 1990, the NJ Supreme Court decided that the education provided to NJ's urban schoolchildren was inadequate and unconstitutional. In later rulings, the Court ordered specific remedies – adequate funding, supplemental programs, preschool, school facilities improvements and accountability measures – to correct this situation. Because the title of the case was "Abbott v. Burke," NJ's poor, urban school districts came to be known as Abbotts. There are currently 31 Abbott districts. The Abbott remedies, in place now for almost a decade, have resulted in significant gains, including over 40,000 children in preschool, new and renovated school facilities, and reduced achievement gaps. But there is much that still needs to be done to provide an adequate and equitable education to the more than 300,000 children in Abbott districts.

What's Happening in Court on September 22?

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

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

Is There Something We Can Do On September 22?

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

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