



## **NJDOE News**

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### **Commissioner of Education Announces Team to Review Operations of Camden School District**

Commissioner of Education David Hespe announced today that a task force comprised of Department of Education officials will be sent into the Camden School District to review the actions of the Board of Education and the operations of the district. The department will be monitoring the district's compliance with law and code and will also be offering technical assistance.

The "Special Assistance Task Force" will be entering the district under the authority provided to the Commissioner of Education under the Comprehensive Educational Improvement and Financing Act (CEIFA). The school funding law permits the department to take certain actions in school districts where students are not meeting the state's new academic standards. These actions could include the restructuring of curriculum and conducting a comprehensive budget evaluation.

"The test scores in Camden have been too low for too long," said Commissioner of Education David Hespe. "It is my hope that our team will be able to get a clear picture of the district's operations and provide helpful suggestions to the district on how to raise student achievement."

"Camden has already failed monitoring and therefore is in what is known as a level two designation," said Assistant Commissioner of Education John Sherry. "This means that the district has developed a corrective action plan which was approved by the state. Despite these measures, the district is still failing."

"It is incumbent on the state to ensure that the tremendous resources being provided to the Camden School District are being used effectively and efficiently on behalf of the district's children."

"Based upon the State Supreme Court's most recent decision in the Abbott v. Burke school funding case, the Commissioner of Education has been given a great deal of responsibility in ensuring that whole school reform is implemented in Abbott districts," said Sherry. "In fact, Camden has been one of the most cooperative districts in the state in implementing whole school reform, with 12 of Camden's schools participating in the first cohort of the program in the current school year."

The department will be sending in a 20-30-member team into the school district. The team will be headed by Dr. Vito Gagliardi, who is a special assistant to Commissioner David Hespe. Dr. Gagliardi is a career educator and a former superintendent of schools in Union County. Last year, Dr. Gagliardi led a similar task force in Asbury Park.

"We plan to work closely with the acting superintendent of the district and the board," said Sherry. "We will be providing technical assistance in the hope of providing the district with the tools to turn itself around so that the children of Camden can receive a high quality education."