



## NJDOE News

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### **DOE Responds to Today's Supreme Court Abbott v. Burke Ruling**

Stating that today's Supreme Court decision affirms the court's objective to give children in the state's poorest districts an opportunity to become strong readers and fully educated, Assistant Commissioner for Abbott Implementation Gordon MacInnes today issued a statement regarding this morning's Supreme Court Ruling regarding the Abbott v. Burke case.

In its decision, the court has allowed — for the second year in a row — the department to fund Abbott districts based on what directly supports improved learning.

The statement reads as follows:

"We are excited about the Supreme Court's decision to implement our definition of how our Abbott districts should be funded. These are difficult financial times and we are proud the court recognized that our children need a balance between what is effective and what is efficient.

"The effective education of the children in the Abbott districts remains a top priority of the McGreevey Administration. Today's decision requires us to fulfill our responsibility for fiscal accountability in each district, so every possible dollar goes directly to improved teaching and learning.

"The DOE will now review the details of the decision and will act in accordance with the court's directives. We are well aware of the ramifications of the ruling, which states, 'The DOE shall have the authority to treat the 2003-2004 fiscal year as a maintenance year for purposes of calculating additional Abbott v. Burke state aid for Abbott districts.' We expect to issue emergency regulation shortly to define 'efficient' and 'effective' expenditures and practices to guide budget decision making.

"This is a part of the Administration's continuing initiative to give all our children the tools they need to succeed, by improving reading, enhancing teacher performance and ensuring accountability in every facet of education. We believe today's decision allows us to meet such needs with funding levels that are reasonable and appropriate."

Assistant Commissioner MacInnes is available this afternoon for brief comments on the ruling. To arrange an interview, contact the DOE Public Information Office at (609) 292-1126 or (609) 341-5295.

The Supreme Court ruling can be viewed here:

<http://www.judiciary.state.nj.us/opinions/supreme/m-976-02.pdf>