

**DRAFT
REGULATIONS FOR
SECONDARY
SCHOOLS**

ABBOTT IMPLEMENTATION

Regulations for Secondary Schools

INTRODUCTION

High schools and middle schools in Abbott districts face enormous challenges. In addition to the challenges that all schools face in preparing young people for personal success and democratic citizenship, New Jersey's urban high schools and middle schools do so in the context of daunting social problems that Abbott was specifically designed to address.

The most striking reflection of these challenges is the "cohort" graduation rate – the number of entering freshmen who successfully graduate within four years. The data indicate that nearly half of Abbott freshmen do not graduate on time, a stark contrast to the 90% average in New Jersey as a whole. Bridging this gap is a defining task, and ultimately a prime measure of successful Abbott implementation at the middle and secondary levels.

Towards this end, the New Jersey Supreme Court, in June 2003, ordered the establishment of a work group to develop a program of whole school reform for middle and high schools for the 2004-2005 school year. This report and its recommendations represent the first fruit of that effort.

The curriculum committee thought carefully about the purposes of high school and reaffirmed that all New Jersey students should leave high school with the ability to hold a job that provides some future opportunities and the ability to find success in college, technical school or the military. In addition, all New Jersey students should carry cultural competence from high school, enabling them to participate successfully in the multicultural democracy that is their heritage and to care for the living planet that is their responsibility.

To achieve these goals, schools must provide all students with a rigorous, comprehensive academic program and a learning environment where all students are valued, known and supported.

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DRAFT REGULATIONS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS (SECTION 3.2)

(h) Establish an Office of secondary Education to foster effective practices and support, coordinate professional development, and inform pre-service and in-service experiences in all Abbott districts.

(i) The Department shall provide professional development and technical assistance beginning in 2004-2005 to prepare districts and schools for implementation of the secondary schools program indicated in (j) below.

(j) Abbott secondary schools and grades within districts shall implement a secondary schools program for students in grades six through twelve, starting in 2005-2006, to increase student achievement in all content areas as evidenced on local, state, national assessments, to increase cohort graduation rates and student attendance rates; to lower instructional days lost due to suspensions and expulsions and to strengthen students attitudes and commitment toward learning. Interim indicators of the program include external assessments of implementation of the programs essential components and teacher, administrator, and student feedback on the program's implementation, supports received, and outcomes. Essential components of the secondary education program shall heretofore be called Abbott Secondary Education Standards, which include:

Calendar

The regulations regarding smaller organizational structures (encompassing small learning communities and small schools) will go into full effect for all Abbott schools with grade levels six and above in September of 2008. By that date all Abbott schools that have students in grades six through twelve should have completed reorganization so that they meet the requirements of this code.

1. Smaller organizational structures for all students –

- i. Smaller organizational structures (small learning communities or small schools) either within existing facilities or new facilities;
 - a) Three hundred students or less in each small learning community within high schools
 - b) Two hundred and fifty students or less in each small learning community within middle schools
- ii. Students and teachers shall be permitted to choose curricular themes as a part of placement in their small learning community:
 - a) All high school teachers and students have the opportunity to choose education themes as part of their placement.
 - b) Placement by education theme in middle schools will be optional for teachers and students
- iii. Student and teacher placement in smaller organizational structures shall be based upon the thematic interests of the students and teachers. Placements will not be based upon achievement level of students or competence of teachers.
- iv. Districts shall be expected to appropriate physical space to accommodate smaller organizational structures for students and staff in grades six through twelve.
- v. Student and teacher teams stay together over multiple years in the school.
 - a) Grades six through eight for middle schools and grades.

- b) Grades nine (9) then ten through twelve (10-12), grades nine through ten (9-10) and eleven through twelve (11-12), or grades nine through twelve (9-12) for high schools.
 - vi. Students and teachers shall receive ongoing academic and extra-curricular experiences that address diversity and multiculturalism in the areas of class, race/ethnicity, and gender.
 - vii. Staff shall participate in discussions that identify resource needs (time, personnel, funding) and resource allocation.
2. Student family advocacy and support systems, which shall include:
- i. All students and families shall have an effective advocate with a recommended minimum of 15 students and their families per professional staff member.
 - a) Advocates shall remain with the student and family multiple years in middle and high school.
 - b) Advocates shall meet with assigned students a minimum of once per week for a recommended minimum of 45 minutes during the academic school year.
 - c) Advocates shall meet individually with assigned families a minimum of two times per year during the academic school year for a recommended minimum of 30 minutes.
 - ii. Opportunities for student leadership in multi-age groups.
 - iii. Students learn healthy group practices and team work.

- iv. A plan of study identifying academic and non-academic needs developed, monitored and supported by student, family and staff pointed toward graduation and post-secondary education and training.
 - v. Intentional, school-initiated programmatic activities that regularly bring families together to support student academic progress. Core programs shall be developed in the following areas:
 - a) Family involvement activities will be arranged to inform/educate families about students' education and schooling experiences.
 - b) Students, staff and families shall meet regularly to address transition issues, particularly transition from the middle grades to high school.
 - vi. Additional school-wide staff available to meet academic and non-academic needs pursuant to 6A:10.3.5(g)-(k).
3. Collective responsibility for student success shall be arranged in the following ways:
- i. Regular common planning time (at a minimum of three hours per week) and qualified coaching within the smaller organizational structure for all teachers sharing the students within that structure and within academic content areas to:
 - a) Discuss and ensure that each student, pursuant to 6A:10.3.5(g)-(k):
 - 1. Is properly assigned to classes
 - 2. Receives all needed academic and non-academic services
 - 3. Regularly attends school

4. Is making expected progress toward graduation
- b) Strengthen all teachers' delivery of meaningful and rigorous instruction
- c) Examine data on student outcomes and best practices that, pursuant to 6A:10-3.5(b)-(c):
 1. Identifies supports needed from building and district leadership to improve both;
 2. Strengthens mutual accountability to implement best practices leading to student outcomes

Calendar

The provisions of the regulations dealing with the academic program shall go into effect by September 2007. All students who enter secondary schools after this date shall take the same college preparatory courses although they may be organized in a variety of ways.

4. Secondary Education Curriculum
 - i. A rigorous curriculum linked to the NJCCCS for all students in grades six through twelve. That curriculum shall engage students, be consistent with educational research and lead to college options following high school. All core courses in English, Math, Social Studies and Science required for graduation shall:
 - a) Be approved or developed, then reviewed and evaluated by a broad cross-section of teachers, principals and supervisors;

- b) Address the most important standards in each content area including those that require the application of skills and knowledge;
 - c) Be clear in stating the purpose of instruction including essential questions or understandings;
 - d) Clearly align the purposes of instruction with learning activities and assessments;
 - e) Include multiple assessments;
 - f) Be organized in a structured manner according to themes, career interests, interdisciplinary considerations or single disciplinary considerations;
 - g) Be available to all students. This includes honors, advanced and Advanced Placement (AP) courses.
- ii. Courses may be developed individually for students or groups of students with the approval of the school principal and superintendent of schools.
 - iii. Courses that are not rigorous by department audits and/or do not address the standards for that grade level are unacceptable in meeting graduation requirements in Math, Science, Social Studies, or English.
 - iv. A variety of electives should be available that are related to the students' special interests and talents.

5. Delivery of Instruction

- i. Teachers and administrators in grades six through twelve shall engage students in ways that result in the completion of high quality work and

higher learner satisfaction. The criteria to meet these requirements shall be based on:

- a) Local, state, and national student performance assessments and student satisfaction or perception surveys.
- b) Teacher evaluations/assessments that demonstrate their ability to:
 1. Apply a variety of teaching strategies that accommodate individual learning styles and interests;
 2. Deliver instruction that is clearly aligned with approved curriculum and standards for the relevant course of study;
 3. Assign student work that incorporates grade level or higher performance from all students;
 4. Evaluate student work in ways that reflect grade-level performance standards for proficiency;
 5. Provide students with independent and interdependent learning experiences that result in active engagement of all students;
 6. Act as effective coaches and facilitators;
 7. Integrate technology effectively into regular instructional activities;
 8. Participate effectively in collaborative professional development activities occurring during the school day and outside of school hours;
 9. Know and be able to use a broad base of academic knowledge with depth in at least one subject.
- c) Administrator evaluations/assessments that demonstrate their ability to:
 1. Build, articulate and personify a vision for and focus on learning;

2. Lead collaborative efforts to improve personalization, instruction and student learning using protocols and skills that facilitate shared decision making;
3. Identify the evidence of learning that is appropriate to the content and grade of the student;
4. Build the capacity of the staff to understand and use effective practices available to facilitate personalization and student learning.

6. Student Support

- i. Effective programs that support improved student learning and well-being shall be available in grades six through twelve in all Abbott schools pursuant to 6A:10-3.5 (c) and (g)-(m).

7. Indicators of School-Level and District-Level Performance in Secondary Schools and Grades:

- i. An increase in high school persistence rates (more students staying in school) beginning two years after initial implementation of these regulations and in high school graduation rate beginning three years after initial implementation.
- ii. An increase in daily attendance rate beginning one year after initial implementation of these regulations.
- iii. A decrease in the number of instructional days missed due to in-school and out-of-school suspensions and unmet social and health needs for students in grades six through twelve beginning one year after initial implementation of these regulations.

- iv. A decrease in course failures for required classes in grades six through twelve within one year of initial implementation of these regulations.
- v. An increase in the percentage of students who pass state assessments within two years of implementation of these regulations.
- vi. An increase in expression of positive sentiment toward schooling and school content as noted in 5.i. (a) within two years of implementation of these regulations.
- vii. Evidence of curricular elements of reform (i.e. policies, school and district documentation) in the first year of implementation of these regulations.
- viii. Evidence of high quality staff development and instructional leadership in the first year of implementation of these regulations.

8. A Professional Development Plan:

- i. Developed jointly by district and building leaders and state department staff and consultants that provides for three phases of capacity building for district and school-based personnel to prepare to implement Abbott Secondary Education Standards;
- ii. Permits districts to begin their capacity building and professional development in cluster groups on a staggered timeline that incorporates the following three phases:
 - a. Phase I: Getting Ready (1st Cohort January 2005-June 2005)
 - b. Phase II: Planning and Leadership Development (1st Cohort July 2005-September 2006)

c. Phase III: Full Implementation (1st Cohort September 2006-June 2007)

iii. Approved by the district and state that permits and requires staff to use a minimum of 50 professional development hours, annually, to acquire new knowledge that will aid in the capacity of individuals to contribute to the newly organized curriculum and instruction and the personalization of student support services.

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