
Subcommittee Meeting

of

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ABBOTT SUBCOMMITTEE

“Presentation in the field of Early Childhood Education”

LOCATION: Committee Room 6
State House Annex
Trenton, New Jersey

DATE: January 16, 2003
10:00 a.m.

MEMBERS OF SUBCOMMITTEE PRESENT:

Assemblywoman Rose Marie Heck, Co-Chair
Senator Ronald L. Rice
Assemblyman Joseph V. Doria Jr.



ALSO PRESENT:

Melanie M. Schulz
Executive Director
Joint Committee on the Public Schools
Abbott Subcommittee

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ASSEMBLYWOMAN ROSE MARIE HECK (Co-Chair): Good morning, everyone.

SENATOR RICE: Good morning.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Some of our members are at different Committee meetings, and Senator Rice and I decided that we would begin this meeting. We have such distinguished guests here today.

And if we can begin with you, Commissioner.

A S S T. C O M M I S S I O N E R G O R D O N A. M a c I N N E S:
Thank you very much. Thank you, Assemblywoman.

Senator Rice, good morning.

SENATOR RICE: Good morning.

ASST. COMMISSIONER MacINNES: First of all, I commend you for holding this hearing. This is a very important subject to the people of New Jersey, to the hundreds of thousands of parents whose children have not yet started school, and it needs to be put in a context. I'm not going to take a lot of time away from Ellen Frede, my colleague, because if you have questions about early education, she can answer them.

But I'd like to just spend a couple minutes putting this in context, because it's easy to get distracted by the details. It's easy to get distracted by the numbers. It's easy to want to find out the thing that should have happened yesterday, will it happen tomorrow? I want to remind people that this is-- When we talk about, particularly, the Abbott promise of a high-quality, prekindergarten program, we're talking about the essential step that must be taken in realizing our goal, which is to have every third grader in New Jersey be a strong reader. If we don't do this right, that will not happen.

It's that simple. And if we do it right, the payoff to everybody in New Jersey will be so huge. This is, if there were an economist here, and there is, actually -- I saw one. (laughter) An economist might say that of all the public investments that can be made, an investment in this population will have the highest payoff, over time, that you can find. And when you compare it with payoffs in the private sector, that investment bankers look at, this is a social investment that is so wise. It's so wise if we do it right.

Now, we have a few problems, and it's worth putting those problems in this context. The Supreme Court in *Abbott* said that children in the Abbott districts -- and we're talking about somewhere between 55,000 and 58,000 eligible 3- and 4-year-olds -- are entitled to an early start for kindergarten. Because there's so much evidence that without that early start, they're going to arrive at kindergarten with a gap. Against the expectation of our public school curriculum and against their peers from more affluent families, that the gap is going to be almost uncloseable. We have increasing evidence of the magnitude of that gap. We have increasing evidence of the origins of it, but it doesn't make any difference. This is a great opportunity to close that gap.

I see that Dr. Barnett (phonetic spelling) is here, and Ellen certainly knows this better than I do, that it's dramatic, in the absence of a high-quality program, how big that gap can be. We're talking about vocabulary differences of a poor child entering kindergarten with a vocabulary of 800 words and a typical affluent child entering kindergarten with a vocabulary of 3,000 or 3,200 words. We're talking about a kindergarten where, if it's in an affluent district, 95 percent of the kids will know their

letters and they'd be able to count to 20 and be able to tell you that 10 is bigger than 7, and all that. And that number in a poor neighborhood might be 30 percent. So what can happen in that classroom over the next nine months is determined by where the kids start. We want to close that kind of gap.

Now, to do that, we need to do a lot of things. And Ellen can speak to the details and to the pedagogy of what we have to do. I really shouldn't do that. But we know this: Having children in programs for six hours a day and 180 days a year, which is what we're able to produce with the Abbott prekindergarten program right now, if those programs are not of high quality, it won't work. The measure of quality is complex. But, basically, it means that you have an intentional environment where you have a well-trained teacher working with a small group of children; with a teacher's assistant; with a curriculum that reflects how young children learn; that has been developed over time and with very good research, and which seizes the opportunity that we all know is present in very young children. Because we all know that young children learn at such a fabulously fast pace, this is the time to get them. And they need to have a quality setting for that to happen and for that gap to get closed.

And we're not there in New Jersey. We have a lot of work to do there. We've had random studies of how we're doing, and we're going to do more of that, using scales to measure this that everybody accepts. This is internationally, I guess, accepted. What it says is, we've got a lot of work ahead of us. And getting that quality raised is going to involve finding people who can work with teachers and assistant teachers, with directors and programs; and do the daily work of pointing out opportunities, of bringing

resources and materials; and enriching the experience of kids, of course, but also, enriching the professional experience of the teachers and the people involved. That has to be done.

The second thing is, we need to reach the kids. Now, right now this year, we're going to be reaching close to 70 percent of the eligible population. This is a big growth from last year, and we should be pleased with that. We should expect that when we get the job done right that, at least, about 90 percent of the kids will be enrolled. So we've got some lifting to do here. Now, by the way, in some districts -- they're small districts -- in some districts, we've already reached 90 percent. But we still have to -- in some of our larger city districts, we have a long way to go.

And now here's the third thing I'll mention, and then I'll be quiet. Don't hold me to that promise, but here's the third thing that I'll mention. We are facing a culture where the idea that people who are involved in early childhood education, particularly prekindergarten programs and kindergarten programs, are seen as, sort of, second-class citizens by much of the education establishment, by superintendents, and by the deans of colleges of education and that kind of thing. It's sort of seen as supervised play. It's not accepted that this is a part of the work that has to be done if children are going to be ready for reading. This is what we want. We want kids who are literate and, therefore, educated.

We have very large institutional barriers to taking what we do with a child at ages 3 and 4 and getting that translated in a seamless way to what happens to that child in kindergarten. You've made this investment, and we're investing a significant amount of money, more than any other state is, in trying

to get to kids at the ages of 3 and 4. Why wouldn't we want that to form the base, and be intimately connected to what happens to the child when they get into kindergarten and first grade? We've got to knit this together. We haven't done that. That's partly a policy issue, although everybody seems to agree instinctively with the policy. Well, of course that should be brought together.

But it really is an educational matter of getting people thinking this way and working this way and seeing the consequences, the good consequences, when they do work that way. So this is a giant, essential step, and it needs to be connected to the other giant essential steps that we want to take with young children, so that when they're in first grade, it's clear to the teacher and everybody else, this kid is ready to read. And when they're in third grade, it's clear that everybody -- grandparents, aunts, neighbors -- "Look at that. This kid is a strong reader." And once you're a strong reader -- once 85 percent or 90 percent of the kids in the Abbott schools are strong readers, as they go through the fourth grade, the fifth grade, the sixth grade, those places are all going to change. They're all going to change.

We're going to transform the schools if we can do this right, because that is the bedrock constitutional entitlement that we've handed these kids, through the Supreme Court and through the cooperation of the Legislature and the Governor and the executive branch. This is their opportunity. And it's the opportunity not just to get universal literacy at third grade, it's the opportunity to transform all of our city schools.

Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. I'll stop talking and take your questions, or turn it over to Dr. Frede.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Senator Rice, do you have any questions or comments for Mr. MacInnes?

SENATOR RICE: Yes. Gordon, when we started this process some time ago, there were concerns, because everybody in government talked about Head Start. I said, as a population that we're trying to reach, the majority of that population is not really in Head Start -- they're in day cares. I'll also argue that we're not going to have people work day care 15, 20 years, 10 years, etc. -- who know more about children than half the people making legislation when it comes to day cares and preschools -- removed from the system. But there were certain criterias required of those folks. There were time frames set up, and I don't remember them, but the time frames were too short. And I said, "They're too short, and you allow a person all the time they need to, within the system, to get what they need, as long as they're pursuing it." Do you know where we are with that?

ASST. COMMISSIONER MacINNES: I do, and I only can give you the numbers of where we are as to the number of teachers who are a part of the Abbott pre-K program who meet the Supreme Court and DOE standard, which is that they hold a certificate, called a P-3 certificate -- pre-K through third grade.

SENATOR RICE: Excuse me. Isn't that for teaching?

ASST. COMMISSIONER MacINNES: That's for teaching.

SENATOR RICE: We're talking about those others that--

ASST. COMMISSIONER MacINNES: You're talking about the assistant teachers?

SENATOR RICE: Exactly.

ASST. COMMISSIONER MacINNES: Yes. The assistant teachers are-- There are two things going on, and I'm not an expert on it. One is what the NCLB, the new Federal law, requires of the so-called paraprofessionals -- which is not the same in terms of what we're called to do in terms of the pre-K program. If somebody is now a teacher assistant in an Abbott classroom, they are not subject to the September '04 deadline, which the court imposed? Isn't that correct?

ELLEN FREDE: Teacher assistants aren't mentioned in that at all. It's only the teacher in the classroom, by 2004, is required to have their undergraduate degree and their certificate. The teaching assistants, right now, we recommend that they have a CDA, but it's not required that they have anything more than a high school diploma and what DHS licensing requires, which is some training.

SENATOR RICE: I raised that because we had encouraged it, but we said, "Wait a minute. To tell me I've been working for 20 years, 10 years, 15, know these kids, and I'm not going to have a job, that's not going to happen." So I wanted to make sure that we gave enough flexibility -- never really got back on changing the law of what we're going to do. I was hoping the Department had enough sense to recognize that's real. I also said that we don't look at Head Start only, because we're not going to have enough dollars to do enough facilities. And if, in fact, day-care providers, number one, have the population, then we should be looking to retrofit some of those facilities to meet the need. And also, we should not eliminate day-care providers, but what we should do is give them what they need.

For example, I work for the day-care provider. I've been working with these kids. You call me an assistant, they call me something else, I stay. But give me the CE or the P-3 person that I need, rather than saying we don't qualify. I just wanted to make sure that that's what we're doing, that's what we're looking at. Because at one time, Head Starters -- and I had to push some of them back and say, wait a minute, this is about children, not about your little kingdom -- because we all knew that Head Start was set up at the Federal level, already providing a process where young people could have some basic cognitive skills. We looked at day care, because of the lack of funding they think they're receiving, as more or less as babysitting. We said, well, then we don't have to change much there, since the population is there. And that's why I raised that, because I haven't heard a lot of noise from my day-care providers and the workers, and I guess I was really trying to figure out that, because it's being addressed and people not being pushed out of the system. The future is one thing.

MS. FREDE: I have a slide on this. If you want, I can start my presentation or I can jump ahead to answer your question, directly, right now.

SENATOR RICE: No, I can wait. As long as it's in there, I can wait.

MS. FREDE: Okay.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I think that's a good idea.

I just wanted to comment. Gordon, you talked about the need -- and reading is so important. We've known that for years. It's absolutely a necessity to give our children, all of our children -- and, of course, being inclusive as far as the Abbott districts are concerned -- to give them a firm

foundation. And without that, everything else is not going to work. Unless a child is ready and able to read, they will continually fall to the bottom of the pile. All of us are fighting to make certain that those children are given the opportunity that everyone else has.

I think that the Education Department has been working very effectively. I'm very proud of Commissioner Librera and his advocacy for all children. And, certainly, we should not forget those children who are in the third grade, or above, who have no reading skills, because they will be our, kind of, misfits in society. We know, through the summits that we've held over the years, that 40 percent to 50 percent of those in our prisons cannot read, and that is the crime against society. Because it could have been changed, their lives could have been productive. I think this is a program that moves in that direction, and I would be very happy if you would show us that program.

Thank you.

Thank you, Gordon.

ASST. COMMISSIONER MacINNES: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

MS. FREDE: Good morning, and thank you for inviting us to provide information on the Abbott Preschool Program.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I just wanted to introduce and make note that Assemblyman Doria is here, head of the Education Committee.

ASSEMBLYMAN DORIA: Good morning.

MS. FREDE: I'm always pleased to talk about this program, because preschool is my passion. I have to say that carefully, because my husband is in the audience, but I am very passionate about preschool. I think

we've been making a lot of progress over the past 11 months and prior to my coming to the Department of Education, also.

I've prepared a PowerPoint just so that the main issues, that I think you'll be interested in, I have very succinctly-- But I wanted to introduce, at first, by reminding you that four years ago I presented to this Subcommittee. I was not in this position then, and it was right after the court had ordered preschool, but before it had been implemented, that one-year time period. We were here to present about some research that we had done on childrens' development in Abbott districts and also on the quality of the program being presented prior to the *Abbott* mandate. I described some classrooms to the Subcommittee then and that we had seen in our research.

In one, a teacher was holding up a picture of a diamond and telling the children it was a triangle. In another, the teacher was teaching some 3-year-old children the silent *E* rule in phonics, which all of us would understand is wholly inappropriate for 3-year-olds. And there are, also, good classrooms. But with the few resources and the poorly qualified teachers, it was hard for those classrooms to be providing the kind of program that the court had in mind.

I've been lucky enough, in the past few days, to visit some of our Abbott classrooms across three different districts. I have some very exciting things to tell you about what I saw. Obviously, this is not research. I'm a researcher, and I understand the difference between anecdote and research, but I'd still like to give you these anecdotes.

In one classroom, the teachers were helping children make a chart comparing the number of children who were wearing boots that day to the

number of children who were wearing shoes. The children put their own name in the chart to show, so that they could-- They were doing things. They were counting. They were estimating. They were comparing. They even did some simple subtraction when it turned out that a child had put her name in the wrong column and they needed to take it away, and “Now how many do we have left if we take one away?”

In another classroom, the teacher had read the *Three Little Pigs* to the children. They were experimenting with the blowability of objects. They took straws and they were blowing feathers and blocks -- or trying to blow blocks -- and they found out that square blocks don't blow and round blocks do, if you do it right. And then they, again, made a chart of the objects, which ones they could blow and which ones they couldn't, but thinking about the Big Bad Wolf and blowing the houses down. So using literature as a base for other kinds of education.

In a classroom where the teacher will be completing her undergraduate degree this year -- and thanks to funding from the Department of Human Services that she's had a scholarship all the way through, and a number of teachers have. The children were recalling the story called *The Mitten*. They were drawing pictures of what they remembered in the story. And then the teacher was taking dictation while they described their picture, and she was doing lots of great things with -- the kind of thing that we want to be seeing, especially that leads to the literacy that Gordon talked about. In one instance, as she wrote the word mitten, she asked the children, as a whole, “What sound does mitten start with? What do you hear at the beginning of m-mitten?” And someone said, “M.” And she said, “Yes, M. And is there

anybody's name in our class who starts with that sound -- MMM?" And a child said, "Marco." She said, "Right. Marco and mitten, they start the same."

That all sounds really simple, I know. But it's the kind of thing that this age group needs to hear. They need to be relevant things like shoes and boots and who's wearing what, but thinking about comparing and estimating. And then using good literature as a base for other kinds of activities, and then getting inside that literature and thinking about specific things, like what does mitten start with? But relating it to those most important words in their lives, their own names.

And so it's very, very exciting for me to get to see that and see the product of the work that everyone has been doing over the past few years. I'd like to, then, show you what we're doing to try to get everyone there, because not all classrooms are there yet, that we have a lot more classrooms who are-- So I have some information to share with you.

(begins PowerPoint demonstration)

First, the way we see our mission is to support and implement high-quality preschool education. We want to support program practices that lead to greater success in school and with an emphasis on early literacy. We are hoping to effectively support Abbott districts, implementation of these coordinated preschool services. Because, when you're talking about 3- and 4-year-olds, you're talking about a very complex system and, especially, with the collaboration that we have between Head Start and the child-care centers and the public school.

Most important is that we need to increase enrollment and capacity. We have to get the quality -- the quality of what children receive has

to be high, but at the same time, children who aren't receiving that are clearly not getting the Abbott program, and so that's very, very important to us. And then, in order to aid in all of these other things, we are creating a multi-faceted assessment system that tracks the needs and the progress of all aspects of the program -- the children, but also the quality of the program, whether teachers are reaching their certification on time, and the parent program -- all aspects of the program.

And just to remind you, these slides-- This is not a paid announcement, but I think that the National Institute for Early Education Research left some things on your desk. I saw them earlier. This information comes from the National Institute for Early Education Research at Rutgers.

But the long-term benefits of preschool are: increased achievement test scores, decreased grade retention, decreased special education, increased graduation, and decreased crime and delinquency. And those are among the findings of long-term studies. Those aren't the only findings.

This slide shows the economic benefits of those kinds of benefits to children, and the three highest quality studies -- in the sense that they have the lowest attrition and followed the children for the longest -- are the Perry Preschool Study, the Abecedarian Study, and the Chicago Parent Child Center Study. The Perry Study and Abecedarian Study were both looked at very carefully by the court in their decision. The Chicago research wasn't out, yet, at that time or not as widely known. And you can see -- I'm not going to go into details about it -- but you can see that, when you equalize the dollars to present-day value, the benefits far outweigh the cost of the program, and that's what Mr. MacInnes was alluding to earlier.

SENATOR RICE: Excuse me, I have a question. That was a longitudinal study.

MS. FREDE: Yes.

SENATOR RICE: Some people use that terminology and, in fact, it's not. What was the time frame on that?

MS. FREDE: The Perry Study--

SENATOR RICE: Was that from pre- to adult or--

MS. FREDE: Yes. The Perry Study began in the early '60s, and they're doing the age 40 follow-up now. So the subjects are 40. It's longitudinal.

SENATOR RICE: That's longitudinal.

MS. FREDE: The Abecedarian Study started in the '70s, and they've completed a study into early adulthood. The Chicago Study -- I think the most recent study just gets them into -- well, it must get them through high school, because they have increased graduations. So they are definitely longitudinal.

SENATOR RICE: Definitely.

MS. FREDE: And randomized controls. The kids were picked from the same population, and the fact that we have three in three different locations really, sort of-- Be careful about asking me research questions, because I'm a researcher at heart. So you're going to get too much information. (laughter)

SENATOR RICE: That's why I asked, because I understand how it's supposed to work.

MS. FREDE: Right.

SENATOR RICE: I just don't do it any more.

MS. FREDE: We have some enrollment figures for you, here, that I thought you might be interested in. At the beginning of this program, about 41 percent of the eligible population were being served. According to the plans that were just reviewed, and the approval letter just went out last week, we are projecting that 77 percent of the population will be served next year. What we assume is, that when we're fully up and running and everything is as it should be, probably 90 percent of the population will actually attend. We would welcome more than that. But what you see in countries that have had universal preschool for a number of years, that's about the percentage that go to preschool. So we're using that as a gauge, not as a cap or to stop us. In one district we're over 100 percent, because our estimation of the universe isn't that good. (laughter) So they're serving more than 100 percent in the universe.

And this is, Senator Rice, your questions about teacher qualifications, and this is based on the data that we just received from the districts during this planning period. About 20 percent of the teachers still do not have their certification, but they're all going to school and receiving scholarship money to complete their degree. We're well aware that some of them won't finish in time, and we're discussing ways to fix that to support them, because, obviously, we don't want to lose experienced and high-quality teachers.

The court required the deadline, so it's a matter of going back to court if we're going to change it. We want to continue to encourage teachers to get that done as quickly as possible.

SENATOR RICE: Just, through the Chair, on that point. Gordon, and this is for the Commissioner, and if necessary, we may have to do it legislatively. I don't want that time frame played with. If we have to go back to court, we go, but do something legislatively. Because we forget a person -- working 10 to 15 years in day care, would require to do some things, wanted to do it, still have found this, here, responsibility -- just can't lock out overnight because some court says here is what you're going to do. And there's a huge shortage, as we all know, in this country in teachers. So we compound the problem by trying to get others, who may already be certified or qualified to do it, to come to this level and give that level up. So that doesn't really help us, and that's why I think it's even more important that we pay strict attention to that.

And I would hope, Chairlady, that this Committee stay on top of that particular issue. I'm not talking about the teachers, per se. We've also argued that: I may have been working day care, and because I'm compelled to go back to get certain things -- in order to continue to work in the environment -- I may decide, well, if I got to do this anyway, once I get this, I might as well continue to go and just go the whole route, because I'm young enough and I have enough time. And that's why, I know, in the urban communities, that was a very important issue. Also, on the day-care providers of a community, that was a very important issue, even more so than some of the Head Start folks who were arguing. And that's the reason I raised that. So it's good to know that somebody is paying attention, but I don't want to rely on the courts either. If there's something we can do, legislatively, to get around it, we need to do that. If not, then let's violate the court law and let the court bring us

back. I mean, honest, violate it. I have no problem about violating court orders (indiscernible).

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I have a question. Do you know of some stories in reality that are -- people who are being affected now?

SENATOR RICE: Yes. If you talk to the Newark -- and Gordon knows most of them -- the Newark day-care network, all of them are affected. Every day-care provider in Paterson and Jersey City are affected, particularly the ones who are the nonprofit, etc., because these are people who, years ago, when day care started, they were just there.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: It's not an isolated instance.

SENATOR RICE: No, it's statewide.

ASSEMBLYMAN DORIA: Yes. I would agree with the Senator. From my experience, it's those that had been providing the service over a long period of time, especially in the urban areas where now they, suddenly, are finding themselves with the situation where they're trying to get the necessary credentials, but the time frame is difficult, because they're working, they're raising families. A lot of these women have families, and they're trying to, also, get their credentials. But some of them have been doing it so long, they're exceptionally good.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Oh, they're wonderful. I only know of one instance, because I only had Garfield with the Abbott district, and one of the women who worked there was heartbroken, because all of this was being rushed through. It, kind of, seems to be dependent on the school system, whether they want to get rid of you or they want to help you move

along. These are people who are training, and then they're let go, right at the end of their work ethic.

ASSEMBLYMAN DORIA: Right.

ASST. COMMISSIONER MacINNES: Could I just respond?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Yes.

ASST. COMMISSIONER MacINNES: This is an area where we agree, absolutely, with the position that Senator Rice expressed, for the reasons that you and Assemblyman Doria -- and we're well aware of it. This will require a return to court. We do want to retain the incentive of the court deadline, because it's important that the qualifications-- We believe there's value to people getting additional academic work and to get supervision from people who know a lot about this, which is one of the things that's possible through the degree program, and we want to retain that. But we're mindful that we have people who are an enormous resource, and we're not going to let that go. But we're going to retain the incentive, but we will return to the court.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: You said it will require going back to the court.

ASST. COMMISSIONER MacINNES: Yes, it does.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: But what kind of a proactive position are you taking in going back?

ASST. COMMISSIONER MacINNES: Well--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Is there a time frame that you're working with?

ASST. COMMISSIONER MacINNES: Yes. We want to assemble the most contemporary information available, so that we can make

a case to the court, when we do return, that we have made an effort. And by the way, most of the teachers who you are talking about are eligible for tuition scholarships. We do know how difficult it is. You're right. Most of them do have families. They're working full-time. This is an awful lot to ask of anybody. It's very hard. And it's to their credit that the 20 percent of the people who are not fully certified yet, that most of them are engaged in programs to become fully certified.

MS. FREDE: They all are.

ASSEMBLYMAN DORIA: Could I just add something, Madam Chairperson?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Please.

ASSEMBLYMAN DORIA: This problem is going to be accentuated because of the Federal legislation, No Child Left Behind, which now is requiring that all the teacher aids who work -- and not only in the preschool programs, in all the programs -- will have to have a minimum of 60 credits or an associate's degree -- one or the other -- again within a very limited time frame. I think it's two years, actually, which is going to be, number one, the question of who's going to pay for this education, and number two, how are they going to get it.

MS. FREDE: It does not apply to preschool programs that are not in Title I schools.

ASSEMBLYMAN DORIA: Well, the Title I--

MS. FREDE: So the vast majority of our programs are not, because they're in child-care centers. And many of the preschool classrooms are in stand-alone early childhood buildings, so it doesn't apply to them either.

ASSEMBLYMAN DORIA: But again, the problem--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Is growing.

ASSEMBLYMAN DORIA: --is going to grow. I mean, not just the preschool program. It's the fact that now we're going to have a whole other group of people, dealing with the same type of situation, that are providing services, and have, traditionally, provided services on a long-term basis -- many of them minorities in our larger districts -- who are now going to have the similar problem, not to get a bachelor's degree, but to get an associate degree.

So the problem is somewhat accentuated and may not directly impact on the early childhood programs, but it's going to impact them on the districts. So all of it coming together is going to have an impact on the districts, and most of all, the people who have been out there serving.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Joseph, so the consequence of not having those degrees within two years means dismissal?

ASSEMBLYMAN DORIA: That's the way the law is written now.

MS. FREDE: Well, but there are other-- It doesn't have to be an AA degree.

ASSEMBLYMAN DORIA: No, it has to be 60 credits.

MS. FREDE: Well, there's also a test, or -- this isn't in our division, so I'm not-- I don't know all the details, and it would be better for someone else to speak to it. But I know they are also pursuing things like the Child Development Associates Credential -- something like that, that would be more performance-based. It was some course--

ASSEMBLYMAN DORIA: The Assembly Education Committee had a hearing on this with the representatives of the department at its last

meeting. There was representation from a number, including from Newark, of the people who represented the aids. It all sounds good, and there's all these other -- but it's still a very difficult situation.

MS. FREDE: Absolutely. Absolutely.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: The time frame seems short.

ASSEMBLYMAN DORIA: The time frame is very short.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Very short.

ASST. COMMISSIONER MacINNES: It is. I think that--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Is there some way to pursue--

ASST. COMMISSIONER MacINNES: Yes. Assemblyman Doria now knows more about this than I do, because he did attend that hearing and I didn't. But I know that we are anxious to pursue the non-traditional approaches that the Federal law makes possible, number one. Number two, we are still awaiting an awful lot of guidance from the United State Department of Education on many of these issues. In that respect, I know that Ellen mentioned that the one possibility is to have a performance-based State developed test, and we are pursuing that as an option, which I think would make it more job-related and more sensible. It deals with the sorts of issues you've just raised.

I don't want to go any further, because this, now, will rely on judgments that will be made in Washington, as well as here. But I can assure you, from all the conversations I've heard, we're pursuing this very aggressively to make those options available.

ASSEMBLYMAN DORIA: And the department did say that.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Are you getting support from the NJEA and the NEA in this regard, or are they not involved with it?

ASST. COMMISSIONER MacINNES: Oh, no. They do represent some of these paraprofessionals in many districts. I certainly haven't heard that they're opposed to our efforts here.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Okay.

ASSEMBLYMAN DORIA: No, they're working-- Again, at that Committee hearing, they were very actively involved and trying to be supportive.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Good. Good. Well, that helps. That helps.

SENATOR RICE: Madam Chair, just one more, right quickly.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Okay. All right. Yes.

SENATOR RICE: I think part of the problem, because I know New Jersey and New Jersey politics very well -- and in no disrespect to the Governor, but just like he can sell these budget problems, you know-- Someone needs to be organizing all the providers to address Washington.

For example, welfare reform. I don't believe the first bill was what you got. The first bill was my bill, and no one paid attention. But when they really wanted welfare reform and they heard the Feds talking about something, all of a sudden we did this comprehensive thing. Somebody agreed. Somebody disagreed. But, all of a sudden, everybody in New Jersey found their way to Washington. It seems to me that we should be aware, as a government, of the kinds of things that we're talking about here, that we know from firsthand experiences, that we live with every day. We should be going

to Washington and saying, "Look, this No Child Left Behind is very wonderful, but you need to, at least, put a clause to give us some flexibility if, in fact, these things happen or if, in fact, this can't be accomplished."

See, if we don't do that, and we just say we're working together here and we're going back to court, and then we run into a conflict with Federal law by way of an interpretation that we didn't interpret, then that's going to take us that much longer. Because day-care providers do not make a lot of dollars--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: No.

SENATOR RICE: --particularly nonprofits. Okay. And the problem is, is that, you're telling me-- I'm not making a lot of money, but I know I have to work, and I like what I'm doing. You're telling me to make the sacrifice, even though you may be paying to go back to school. I'm going to bite that bullet. But then we'll start thinking, "Well, I have the associate. I might as well work on the bachelor's." When I get to the bachelor's, I'm still not making a lot of money as a day-care provider. There's a shortage of education in the school system, and I have a superintendent that says, "Why don't you come on over here? We can almost double their salary, okay." And I'm going to say, "Sayonara" to day care. So I'm right back where I started with no day-care participants.

That's where the problem is. So it's a lot more enhanced and comprehensive than I think that State folks understand, to some degree, because you only think of so much. So I, at least, want to be on record with that, and that's why I want to make sure that this Subcommittee from the Joint Committee on Public Schools really pay and constantly raise questions --

if it's letters and the staff -- stay on top of that issue on a regular basis, in terms of reporting where are we with that. At some point in time, I would like to see -- and we'll probably set this up, Chairs -- maybe we need to have a joint committee meeting where we invite some of our Federal delegation in. Whether they're on education -- that is not the issue. They're our voice in Washington. I'm not on every Committee here, but I guarantee you I'll raise hell about everything that comes through here.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Well, you're right. They don't know everything that we know.

SENATOR RICE: And that's what we need to do with-- Sure. So we need to bring them in at some point in time, okay?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I think that's a wonderful idea.

MS. FREDE: Senator Rice, I'd just like to point out that this year, in the planning process and the budgeting process, all of the teachers and the child-care providers are getting comparable salaries to the public school teachers, if they have comparable qualifications. So, if they have the certification, they are getting what they would get if they worked in the district. We were aware of that issue of teachers jumping, and we didn't want that to be happening. And pirating from within your own program, that doesn't work.

SENATOR RICE: That started this year, you said?

MS. FREDE: That's right. Actually, this year. Although it's not as uniform as we would like. But for next year, it was something we checked in every single budget. So it should be quite uniform.

I just wanted to tell you a little bit about what we're doing to try to improve quality and accountability. And we're doing that by supporting and expanding district capabilities and supporting the collaborative program planning efforts within the districts, and then measuring program quality and conducting needs assessment.

In the districts, one of the key positions for improving quality is what is, generically, called *the master teacher*, though each district calls them something different. They're called *resource teachers* or *coaches*, but these are people who have experience, or should be people with experience, who also can help others become better teachers. But we found out, in research that I conducted prior to coming to this position, that there was a wide variety of backgrounds and abilities among the people who had been employed in these positions. So we instituted, at the Department of Education, a master teacher seminar, where the master teachers come together in clusters and are learning about best practice, but also, specifically, coaching others and how to help others. You can be a great classroom teacher and not know anything about helping someone else be a great classroom teacher. Those are the kinds of things we saw across the board that were needed. It's wonderful to see what's happening with this group of people and how much they're helping each other across districts. It's a wonderful initiative.

In 28 out of the 30 districts, this was not a required thing. The 28 out of the 30 districts are participating. The master teachers can apply this to a college credit. They have to pay for the credit, but they get-- At the end, if they're successful, they will be professional development fellows. They're getting a little certificate that says that.

Another thing that we're doing, this has been a real issue. The districts really didn't have, in most cases, the people with exactly the right background to help the providers with the kind of budgeting they needed to do for this program, and the kind of accounting and reporting that they needed to be doing because of this specific contract. So most districts, next year, will have a fiscal specialist. And we're providing training to the fiscal specialist in how to help others put together a budget, how to help the providers.

We had provider budgets that came in last year where the receipts were in a shoe box. This was their accounting system. These are little ma-and-pa kind of operations and they just need help. So that's what this is for. But, also, to make sure that-- We also have some other instances -- they're rare -- where money has not been used appropriately. And so, we need to have some accountability for that as well.

To improve the collaborative program planning, we instituted a three-year operational plan this year, rather than the one-year that they've had in the past. We've emphasized working on long-term goals and objectives, on creating a vision for the future. And this is districtwide -- district with their community partners. We developed, with lots and lots of help -- we had 11 committees going at one point. One of my staff said, "If I ever have to go to another committee meeting, I'm going to quit." But we developed program implementation guidelines to make the standards clearer for what the Abbott program is. The court set out some specific standards, but we needed to flesh those out and go beyond it. The plan also helps the districts better implement and evaluate their program with their partners.

To measure program quality and to conduct needs assessment, so that we can do good program planning -- both at the individual classroom level, at the program level, at the district level, and then at the State level -- we are doing some different initiatives. One is, we're just beginning a self-study and validation process, and that's tied to their plan, their three operational plan, and to the guidelines that we've developed. And then we formed the Early Learning Improvement Consortium, which is five state colleges and universities that responded to a request for proposal. They are conducting classroom observations looking at general classroom quality, literacy practices, and math practices in their early childhood programs.

They are conducting some standardized child assessments, and also developing a performance-based child assessment system. This is where you look at what children-- We know that testing young children is not the best way to know what they can do, because little kids don't get tests. It's kind of like trying to do behavior mod on a cat. It just doesn't work. So it tells us something, but it doesn't inform me as a teacher. And so, we're trying to develop some assessment methods that are better -- that help teachers in the teaching and learning process, but will also give us some important information.

As I said earlier, the key is expanding enrollment, and to do that we need to expand facilities. One piece is outreach efforts. Districts are targeting unserved populations. They have specific outreach plans, and then fully including Head Start. Next year, 3,000 Head Start children will be funded with Abbott funds. And the main thing that's keeping us from increasing that is facilities, because if you have a class size of 20 and you have

a morning class and an afternoon class, you now need -- let me do my math here -- three classrooms to serve those children, instead of the one that you had. So facilities is still a major roadblock to full Head Start participation.

But all of the districts have been meeting with the Head Start providers in their district. And with the exception of just a couple of districts, we, at least, have some children being served, and we're working on that very aggressively. We've met with the regional office for Head Start. We've met with the New Jersey Head Start Association, and in each district we have meetings to try to further that.

To support the critical upgrade and expansion of facilities, we've -- One of the committees that met over the summer developed preschool facility standards. We're getting those into regulation. There are different ways in which different parts of the standards need to be put into regulation. We will be directing districts to amend their long-range facilities plan to include preschool, because up until now they had been told not to include preschool in their plan.

(ends PowerPoint demonstration)

So, in summary, we have initiated multifaceted efforts to improve program efficiency, quality, and we've really focused on early literacy in those efforts. Enrollment has increased an average of 20 percent in just one year. I'm sorry, in just one year, it increased 20 percent. We have new positions in the districts to help with improving quality and accountability. We have other kinds of initiatives that we're doing to improve collaboration. Every district will have an Early Childhood Advisory Council, which I forgot to mention earlier, and lots of important tracking and assessment going on, for both

accountability purposes, but also to improve the teaching. So they serve both purposes. We are very focused on the need to expand facilities.

Thank you.

I'm happy to take more questions, also.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Senator.

SENATOR RICE: At the beginning of your presentation, you indicated that -- and also you put it on your slide -- that the increased enrollment and capacity -- that was kind of distorted. So this is really a suggestion on your presentation if, in fact, you didn't mean it that way. If you meant it that way, then this is a suggestion that you change, okay.

MS. FREDE: Well, tell me what you thought I meant.

SENATOR RICE: When you say increased enrollment, I believe you mean that we're trying to get everybody at that age level enrolled into a program. But -- and you said capacity. Capacity kind of brings some weight to something, okay. But you need to add another phrase to that -- with limited classroom size.

MS. FREDE: Oh, absolutely. Oh, yes.

SENATOR RICE: Okay. Because we don't want people getting misinterpretation. And there are those of us that been arguing this case so long we pick up on little things like that. That's why I didn't talk about-- I talk about the persons who have been there for 30 years, etc.

But in terms of your presentation, I understand. And this is something that, Gordon, I would like to have from the Joint Committee and, certainly, the Vice-Chair of the Joint Committee -- an Assemblyman, who is also the Chairman of Education in the Assembly -- I would like to think he

would want the same thing. Every time I'd go to a meeting or hear a presentation, I hear about these committees that are meeting to lay direction for us that, ultimately, would have a direct impact on whatever it is we do in the district, either via legislation or some other way. We don't know who the folks are in these committees or organizations. And so every working committee that's doing anything that's related to the Abbott district, could you please get, to the Chairs, a list -- that this committee is a working committee for this reason, this is this and these are the people, these are the organizations they represent, or something -- so that we have an idea how diversified these committees are, not in terms of just ethnicity and gender, but statewide.

See, when I hear urban academic problems, I just can't help from being a southern guy. The urban side I was okay, but the rural community of the south, I just can't help from thinking that those poor farmer kids have the same problems we have. No one is really articulating that, per se, in terms of catching up -- what day-care providers being a part of a process. How much money can they have out there, unless they're big, wealthy farmers? So could you, at least, get that, through the Chairs, and make that not such a long thing. I mean, if you're really meaning -- I'm willing to bet you, you could probably call over now and they hit the computer and download it, etc. So I suspect in the next 10 days, we'll have that.

And would you follow up on that, Melanie and Karen? Okay.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN DORIA: Good idea.

ASST. COMMISSIONER MacINNES: Should we give it to Melanie?

SENATOR RICE: Yes, you can give it to Melanie.

But, Melanie, when you get it, make sure our committee members have it, but also make sure that the Chairs of the Senate and Assembly Education Committees have it for their distribution, okay, to their members. Okay.

Thanks, Gordon.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Do you have any questions, Joe?

ASSEMBLYMAN DORIA: No. Fine.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Thank you very, very much.

ASST. COMMISSIONER MacINNES: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

MS. FREDE: Thank you.

SENATOR RICE: Is it possible, Madam Chair-- Could you get a copy of your presentation to the Chair, so she can get it distributed to us?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Would anyone in attendance like to address the Committee for any reason? (no response)

No. You have an opportunity.

Are you coming forward to address us?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: Oh, no.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Okay.

Well, thank you very much for your attendance, and we will certainly have a follow-up meeting, Senator.

SENATOR RICE: Thank you, Madam Chair.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: This meeting is adjourned, with permission of those in attendance.

(MEETING CONCLUDED)