

Office of the Governor

PO BOX 004
TRENTON, NJ 08625

NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Pete McDonough
Jayne O'Connor
609-777-2600

RELEASE: November 24, 1998

Whitman Calls Upon Jersey City Teachers to Set an Example Stop Breaking the Law and Start Thinking About the Kids

New Jersey Gov. Christie Whitman today called upon striking teachers in Jersey City to end their illegal strike and return to the classroom. She noted that because the striking teachers have failed to end their job action, the Attorney General has joined with the school district in seeking further fiscal sanctions against the union and its leaders, as well as an order to terminate teachers who continue to break State law and defy a court-ordered return to work.

"This strike is illegal and penalizes children in search of the education they deserve. The Jersey City Education Association's decision to flaunt the law and interfere with our children's education is inexcusable," Gov. Whitman said.

"This is all about the children. It's about the giving them the kind of education they deserve and setting an example we expect them to follow," the Governor said.

"Our laws establish a clear system and framework for teachers to air any grievances they may have without putting our children and their future at risk," the Governor said. "Unfortunately, the Jersey City teachers' union seems to have little concern for the law and less for our children.

"The Jersey City teachers' union should get back in the classroom and to the negotiating table. Children are losing valuable learning time while the union defies our laws and our courts," she said.

"The Jersey City teachers and their union are breaking the law and the state will seek financial sanctions against the teachers' union and its leaders. Unless the strike is brought to an immediate stop, we will seek the termination of those teachers participating in this illegal action," she said.

"Simply put, the members of the Jersey City teachers' union need to start setting an example for our children to follow, and they need to do it immediately," she said.

The Jersey City Education Association began its illegal strike on Thursday, November 19. State Superior Court Judge Martin Greenberg ordered strikers back to work and imposed a \$100,000 per day fine against the union to compel an end to the illegal strike. The union has failed to meet the Judge's order and today the State has joined with the local district to ask for sanctions against individual union leaders and for the ability to terminate striking teachers without regard for any previously-held tenure rights.