



## It's Time To Value Success Instead of Failure

*Equal Funding Means Better Public Education For All Children*

In 1981, the Education Law Center filed a complaint in Superior Court on behalf of 20 children attending public schools in Camden, East Orange, Irvington, and Jersey City. That lawsuit, *Abbott v. Burke*, challenged New Jersey's system of financing public education under the Public School Education Act of 1975.

The ELC claimed that the State's method of funding education was unconstitutional, in part, because certain poorer urban public school districts could not adequately meet the educational needs of students without exponentially more money from taxpayers across New Jersey.

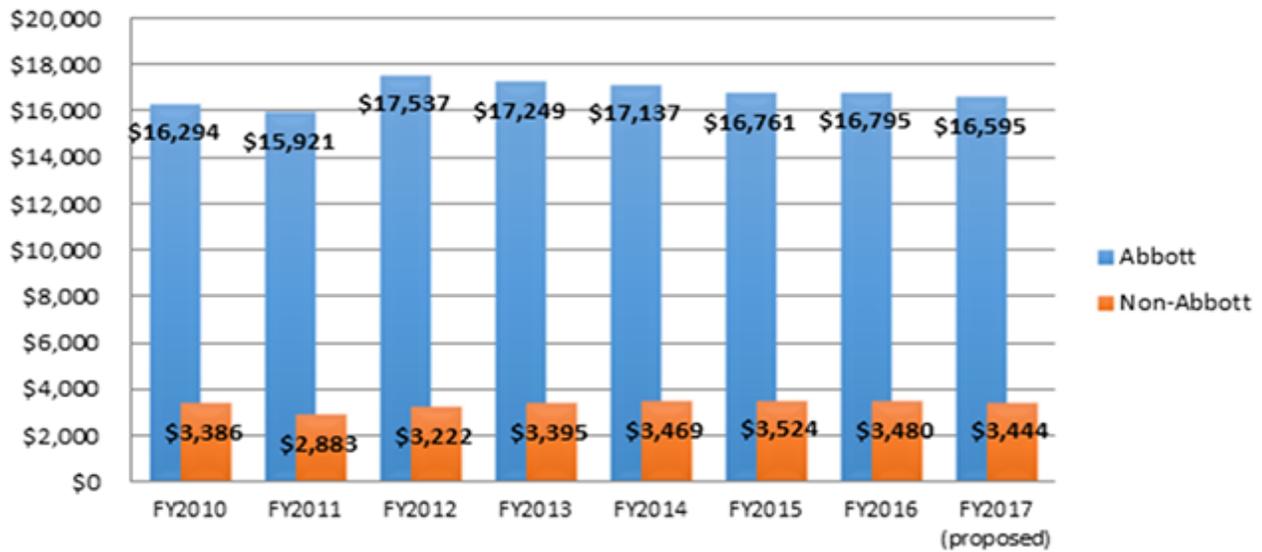
In 1985, that case was elevated to New Jersey's Supreme Court, which in 1990 ruled that the State's school funding law was unconstitutional for children in 28 "poorer urban" school districts (a number of districts the State Legislature would later expand to 31).

As a result, those 31 "Abbott" districts, which make up 5% of New Jersey's public school districts, started to receive immensely more in per-pupil state aid than several hundred public school districts in New Jersey's other urban, suburban and rural communities.

Between 1985 and the upcoming school year, state taxpayers will have sent \$97 billion to the 31 Abbott school districts, compared to **\$88.2 billion** to the remaining 546 districts for PreK-12 education. That's 52% of total state education dollars going to 5% of districts.

Yet Abbott districts, receiving five times more per pupil than non-Abbott districts, have graduation rates that have been consistently 10 percentage points below the state average, according to the available New Jersey Department of Education data.

## Average State Aid Per Pupil In Abbott vs. Non-Abbott School Districts



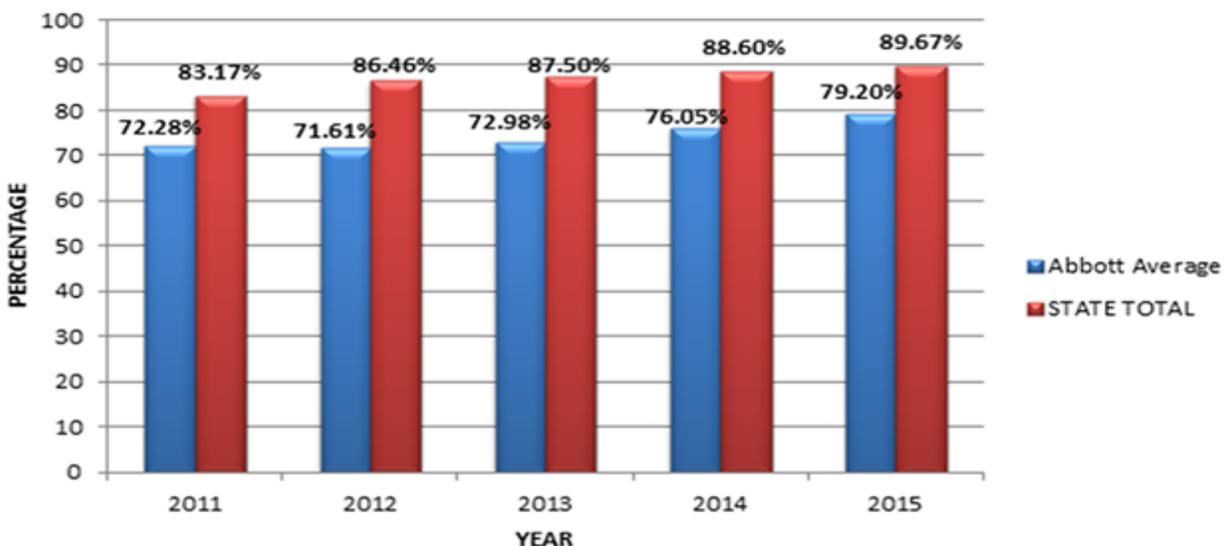
As the above graph demonstrates, over the last six years, Abbott districts have consistently been receiving tens of thousands of dollars more than non-Abbott districts.

New Jersey spends the third-most state tax dollars in the nation per pupil on K-12 education, \$13.3 billion for this past school year.

In 1990, 23% of the state's students, representing the Abbott districts, got 41% of the state aid. In Fiscal Year 2017, while still representing 23% of the state's students, they receive 58% of the state aid.

For far too long, politicians in Trenton have appeased their teachers' union patrons by throwing more and more wasted money at failing districts. All the while, taxpayers have seen their property tax bills continue to rise and far too many generations of children have been underserved by failing schools that have given them no real promise for successful futures.

## Abbott School District Graduation Rates vs. State Averages



It is time to do something different to ensure that no student in New Jersey is trapped in a failing school. More money does not guarantee better academic performance, and the Christie Administration is determined to forge a new path that provides equal funding for the education of each student.