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For Release: November 20, 2001

Abbott Districts File Early Childhood Education Plans; Annual Audits in a Timely Fashion

Commissioner of Education Vito A. Gagliardi, Sr. today announced that the vast majority of Abbott school districts filed both their early childhood education plans and annual financial audits on time with the Department of Education. The early childhood education plans, for the 2002-03 school year were due, by court order, on or before November 15 and the annual audits were due at the department on or before November 15. Under language in the FY 02 budget, Abbott districts that do not submit their audits in a timely fashion may have state aid withheld.

"I am pleased that the Abbott districts responded positively to the deadlines," said

Gagliardi. "In particular I am pleased that the Newark school district which had not submitted its annual audit on time in several years was the third Abbott district to submit its audit this year, on October 31. I am somewhat disappointed that all of the districts did not submit their materials on time.

"The department has provided an exceptional level of technical assistance to the Abbott districts to help in the development of early childhood education plans. The department held three technical assistance sessions for all the districts, scheduled additional private meetings with districts that felt they needed assistance, and provided a great deal of telephone assistance to those districts requesting such help."

Twenty-five of the Abbott districts submitted their plans on time. Hoboken, Irvington, Bridgeton and Passaic submitted their plans on November 16. Union City has still not submitted its plan. In addition, twenty-six of the Abbott districts submitted their annual audits on or before November 15. Bridgeton submitted its audit on November 16 and Irvington, Camden and Vineland, have not yet submitted their audits to the department.

Annual audits are required, by law, to be filed by all school districts with the department on or before November 5. This year the Abbott districts were given until November 15 to complete and file their audits before sanctions were imposed.