



NJDOE News

For More Information Contact the Public Information Office:

**Kathryn Forsyth
Ron Rice
609-292-1126**

For Release: November 16, 2004

DOE and Education Law Center to Discuss Amendments to Abbott X

Dr. William L. Librera, Commissioner of Education, announced today that the DOE will withdraw its motion to amend some provisions of Abbott X, which was filed with the Supreme Court on October 14, 2004, and begin conversations with the Education Law Center about the complex educational issues raised by the filing.

The filing asked the Court to grant DOE greater flexibility to shift the focus of its work from Abbott schools to those districts with large numbers of low-performing students. This change reflects the results gained during the last school year, when student proficiency on the 4th grade language arts test increased significantly in areas in which assistance was focused on district central office capacity to support schools.

The Commissioner said the decision to withdraw the filing at this time was based on two very positive and clearly productive sessions with the ELC mediated by the Honorable Richard Williams. The Supreme Court had asked for the formal mediation at the ELC's request.

"I believe the department can best continue the discussion of ways to improve student achievement in low-performing Abbott schools and districts through an informal, direct and collaborative set of meetings with the Education Law Center. We are optimistic that this, rather than a petition to the Supreme Court, is the best course of action at this time," said Commissioner Librera.

Assistant Commissioner for Abbott Implementation Gordon MacInnes said the meetings would be preceded by a proposal from the Department on the specific changes on which it seeks the Center's reactions and possible agreement.