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# *Subcommittee Meeting*

of

## ABBOTT SUBCOMMITTEE

*"Presentation from representatives from the Association for Children of New Jersey  
and the Rutgers University Graduate School of Education"*

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**LOCATION:** Frances C. Smith Center (School No. 50)  
Elizabeth, New Jersey

**DATE:** June 1, 2005  
10:00 a.m.

**MEMBERS OF SUBCOMMITTEE PRESENT:**

Assemblyman Joseph Vas, Co-Chair  
Senator Ronald L. Rice

**ALSO PRESENT:**

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



*Meeting Recorded and Transcribed by*  
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**ASSEMBLYMAN JOSEPH VAS (Chair):** Good morning, and thank you for joining us.

I'd, first of all, like to call to order the Joint Committee meeting on Public Schools, specifically the Abbott Subcommittee meeting today.

And I'd like to express my thanks to the city of Elizabeth and the Board of Education of Elizabeth for allowing us to host this meeting here today. I'd also like to welcome the other members of the Joint Committee, the Chairman of the Joint Committee, Senator Ronald Rice, who's here today.

Senator, welcome and thank you.

**SENATOR RICE:** Thank you.

**ASSEMBLYMAN VAS:** And at this time, I'd like to ask Mayor Chris Bollwage to extend a welcome to us today. Mayor Bollwage is one of the state's outstanding mayors. He's done great things here in the city of Elizabeth, reclaiming many of the brownfields and creating a better quality of life for the people here; and someone who obviously wants to bridge a partnership with the Board of Education here in the city of Elizabeth.

So, Mayor Bollwage, please.

**MAYOR J. CHRISTIAN BOLLWAGE:** Thank you very much, Mayor. I know you're an Assemblyman and you're in your role as Assemblyman. But you'll always be a mayor in our eyes, as the Mayor of Perth Amboy.

There's no greater title than mayor.

Sorry, Senator. (laughter)

I want to welcome Senator Rice to Elizabeth. The Senator and I have worked on some numerous issues together, regarding State legislation, as well as with Assemblyman and Mayor Joe Vas.

And I want to welcome all of you here to this Abbott Subcommittee meeting. The Abbott school district is extremely important to communities like Elizabeth. And when Abbott dollars, and the Abbott district, and the message of Abbott comes under attack, you often wonder why and you wonder what the message really is. I believe that when the Constitution was written over 200 years ago -- when they said that all men were created equal, they also meant children. And whether you're born in an affluent area of this state, or a poorer area of this state, you're entitled to the same education. And whatever the State can do to afford that education to young people, regardless of their social and economic background, is important, and it's supported, and it demands the support of the entire state.

And I commend Assemblyman Joe Vas and Senator Rice for taking these meetings on the road and bringing them to different districts.

Thank you for coming to Elizabeth. (applause)

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Thank you very much, Mayor.

MAYOR BOLLWAGE: I didn't know if the Superintendent was going to speak after me.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Yes, yes.

MAYOR BOLLWAGE: Otherwise, I would recognize him.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: At this time, I'd also like to ask the Superintendent of schools here, for the city of Elizabeth, Pablo Muñoz, to say a few words as well.

**P A B L O M U Ñ O Z:** Good morning.

I'd like to welcome the Abbott Subcommittee of the Joint Committee on Public Schools -- Senator Rice, Assemblyman Vas -- and Mayor J. Christian Bollwage, and all honored guests in attendance. And thank you all for coming this morning to attend today's meeting.

The initial education of our youngest children is of paramount importance to their development throughout their educational careers and throughout their lives. I am happy to see that these efforts are being studied to develop reports such as the one which will be presented here today, that will help determine the best way to inspire our children to think, to learn, to achieve, and to care.

As many of you may know, I was named Acting Superintendent of Schools at the Elizabeth Board of Education meeting on May 12. From Day 1 as Acting Superintendent, it has been my goal to provide excellent educational experiences and services to all of our students. There is no better place to start than with early childhood education.

The Elizabeth Board of Education is a big believer in early childhood education. Our district works with community providers. My good friend from Egenolf is here -- has a lot of our children. They house many of our 3-year-old children. Pre-kindergarten classrooms are offered in our elementary schools, in addition to our two stand-alone early childhood centers. You, today, are at School 50, which is the Frances C. Smith

Center. We also have one across the street from my offices called the Donald Stewart Center, School No. 51. This one is 50, and that one is 51.

We are also eagerly awaiting the opening of our newest early childhood education center, the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Early Childhood Education, School No. 52, which is opening down on Trumbull Street, in the port area of Elizabeth -- and will be opening for our students around August of 2005, this summer.

Each of our early childhood education centers offer a dual language program that gives children a chance to acquire the English and Spanish languages by interacting with staff and peers. The development of our staff is equally important to us. It is a great strength of our district. Elizabeth provides excellent staff training, especially to our early childhood teachers, who receive professional development training from teacher trainers specializing in early childhood education.

I'm encouraged that the right steps are being taken to make this goal a reality.

I now leave you all to the representatives from the Association for Children of New Jersey and the Rutgers Graduate School of Education, who have co-authored a report on the preparation and professional development of preschool teachers.

I'm happy to host this meeting. I thank you for coming. Enjoy the day. (applause)

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Thank you.

Mr. Superintendent, is Mr. Gonzales, the Vice Principal here -- of the school?

MR. MUÑOZ: He is.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: He was on the agenda to give a welcoming remark also. I don't know if he's available to do that now or not.

MR. MUÑOZ: We'll go get him right now.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Okay.

While we're waiting for Mr. Gonzales, I just want to make an observation. This is a school, I understand, that was built at the former site of a Rickel's department store. And I must say it's an impressive building. I'm very impressed with the materials that were used here and the manner in which it's been maintained. And the utilization of old grayfields, as they're called today by the State, for other purposes -- and reclaiming this particular site for this purpose. And look to have the opportunity, perhaps, to walk through the school and take a look at some of the classrooms when we conclude.

Thank you.

Senator Rice, do you want to make some comments at this time, before we get started?

SENATOR RICE: Well, first of all, let me just say good morning to everyone and my good friend Mayor Bollwage, and also commend him for the job he's been doing in Elizabeth. You know, those of us who represent government -- what happens in one city affects the other.

I've lived in the city of Newark all my life. Elizabeth has been my playground over the years. And I've seen all of our urban cities go downward in trend, and they've all bounced back now, thanks to the mayors that are being very effective, whether it's Perth Amboy, or whether it's Elizabeth, Newark, and others.

But I also want to say to Mayor Vas, Assemblyman Vas, that it's been a real pleasure working with you in the Assembly. You really put some teeth into this Subcommittee.

For those who are here at the Joint Committee on Public Schools-- We are the committee of Republicans and Democrats from both the Assembly, as well as the State Senate. I chair the Committee, and I structured it into Subcommittees. We get more done. The preschool component is a very, very important component. And in the past, it's not gotten enough attention until Assemblyman Vas has taken over the chair of the Subcommittee.

So I wanted to commend you for what you're doing.

What we hear from those of you today becomes very important to how we deliberate and legislate in the State of New Jersey, in both houses of the Legislature. And so we have to move forward, particularly in the Abbott districts. There's been a lot of controversy about Abbotts, about school construction. But those things happen in government. And our job is to put them in their proper perspective, but not slow the process of school construction, not hinder the preschool development, and the institution.

And so I'm happy to be here, and I'm happy to be here to listen to the things that you have to say this morning.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Thank you, Senator.

I understand that Mr. Gonzalez has arrived.

Mr. Gonzalez, you have an opportunity to say a few words on behalf of the school.

**MANUEL E. GONZALEZ:** Okay.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Use the podium.

MR. GONZALEZ: Hello.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: It's active. (referring to PA microphone)

MR. GONZALEZ: Good morning, everyone.

Mr. Bollwage, Mr. Muñoz, members of the panel, members all, thank you very much for being here. This is a pre-K center. And I would say that this is the beginning of a new era, because we are receiving children that are 3 years old, 4 years old, and we are preparing them to have a better future in Kindergarten, in first grade, second grade, and so on.

After two years of being here, students are supposed to emerge ready to get into elementary school and be successful and, hopefully, ready to complete their whole cycle before they go to college.

We're trying our best to make sure that this program is more and more successful each day.

And I really appreciate you meeting here and seeing what we do. I invite you, after you are done with this, to have a little walk to the back where the classrooms are, and you will see for yourself everything that we are trying to do here.

Once again, thank you very much and enjoy your day in our company.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Thank you.

MR. GONZALEZ: Thank you for inviting me. (applause)

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: And before we get started, I just wanted to thank Senator Rice and all the members of the Committee. As Senator Rice has indicated, we are an information-gathering committee. We do not have any official legislative authority as a body, but individually

and, obviously, collectively as members of our respective caucuses, some of the information that's gathered here, obviously, is used to propose legislation, hopefully enact legislation that will affect public education in a positive way.

We often read, in the newspapers, the debate about the Abbott versus the non-Abbott. I think that's a debate that we need to, as they say, lay off of-- The focus of our efforts should be on how we improve the quality of education and recognize the fact that New Jersey has the highest standards for public education. And we have the highest achievers in the nation in public education. And in that process, there is a disparity between the poor and the affluent. And the State has been ordered by the courts to provide the funding to the poorer school districts. And, in fact, the State has agreed, through an appropriations action, to create a construction corporation to build schools in the state. And rather than focus on the debate between Abbott and non-Abbott, we should be focused on how we maintain the momentum of the Schools Construction Corporation, and not allow the debate that currently exists to affect that momentum that has improved the quality of education throughout the state.

And I know, as a mayor and an Assemblyman -- I know Mayor Bollwage would agree with me -- that there is a synergistic relationship between the policies that are undertaken by local government and local boards of education, because, at the end of the day, we serve the same community of people. And if, in fact, we're going to create an environment for the empowerment of people in our cities, and ultimately create the economic growth that's going to sustain the state, we need to continue to

focus on the quality of education. And we cannot allow the lack of funding that currently exists in the Schools Construction Corporation for non-Abbott school districts -- that essentially has been exhausted -- to interfere with the commitments and the requirements of the courts that have been made to the Abbott school districts. Because, in my opinion, the only reason there has been a slowdown of the Schools Construction Corporation is that most of the money that is currently available today -- almost \$2 billion -- about \$1.8 billion can only be spent in the Abbott school districts, and about \$200 million can be spent in the non-Abbott school districts. The original appropriations was about \$8.6 billion: \$100 million to go to the vocational schools, and about \$6 billion going to the non-Abbott school districts. Most of that money -- almost all of that money -- has been awarded to the non-Abbott school districts.

And so at this particular stage, I believe the Abbott school districts are being held hostage until additional funding is made available to the non-Abbott school districts. So that's really the focus of what we have to think about today.

And I would urge the Commissioner, rather than make what I would consider controversial policy statements about how Abbott school districts should be removed from the Abbott school program, to get involved directly in trying to move forward the school construction of our state and to maintain that momentum that was generated over the last several years.

With that having been said, I'd like to welcome, to today's Committee, a number of speakers that are going to be making reports on

the -- Educating Preschool Teachers: Mapping the Teacher Preparation and Professional Development System in New Jersey.

Welcome, first, Cynthia Rice, who is a Senior Policy Analyst with the Association for Children of New Jersey; and Jill McLaughlin, also an Education Policy Analyst with the Association for Children of New Jersey. I believe they have a presentation they're making this morning.

**CYNTHIA C. RICE, ESQ.:** Dr. Carrie Lobman is going to speak.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Okay.

Doctor.

And Dr. Lobman, perhaps you can welcome those people who are with you today -- introduce them, as well.

**CARRIE L. LOBMAN, Ed.D.:** Sure. You actually -- you just did, but I will do it again.

Can you hear me without the higher mike? (referring to PA microphone) (affirmative responses)

I'm Carrie Lobman. I'm from the Graduate School of Education at Rutgers University. I'd like to thank the Subcommittee for having us today, and welcome you on behalf of my colleague Sharon Ryan, who was not able to be here today -- and also Cynthia Rice and Jill McLaughlin, from the Association for Children of New Jersey.

We are going to be talking with you today about a study that we've been doing over the past four years on teacher preparation -- early childhood teacher preparation and professional development here in New Jersey.

So what I wanted to do-- I wanted to start by saying, it's clear to us -- if you read the newspapers, if you watch TV -- that teacher preparation and the skill level of the teachers is clearly a key piece of the success of the Abbott programs and of all preschool programs across the country.

In particular, the report that just came out in the past couple of weeks -- it's been in all of the newspapers -- about the expulsion rates-- Whatever you may think about the study, the numbers-- It is clear that teachers who are better prepared, who have specialized training in early childhood, and have a bachelor's degree, are more able to implement the kinds of programs that we want to see, and are more able to help children use the early childhood programs that they're in to enter school ready to learn.

So, here in New Jersey, we are at the cutting edge of early childhood teacher preparation. We are one of a few states in the country that have been requiring our preschool teachers to get a BA and specialized training in early childhood.

So the purpose of this study was actually to see how successful have we been, what's happening in these teacher preparation programs, and are people getting the type of training that they need in order for us to reap the benefits of the early childhood programs that we have in place. And we're over four years into this process and, in part, we're trying to answer the question of: Is being qualified in the ways that has been required of these teachers the same thing as being of high quality? Are we ending up with teachers who are skilled in the areas that research says they need to be

to work in the classroom, in beautiful buildings like this, and to help children to start their school careers?

So what we're going to present to you today is a summary of the results of a three-phase study of early childhood teacher preparation and professional development that was funded by the Foundation for Child Development, and done in cooperation with the Association for Children of New Jersey.

I'm going to present some of the findings on teacher preparation, and then Jill is going to take over and talk to you some about professional development.

So what do we know about what teachers need to know? Basically, the minimal amount that we want teachers to have is a BA and specialized training. But what is that specialized training, what do we need people to have learned, and what kind of experiences do they need to have?

Well, what the research says is that there's really three components to a teacher preparation program that's helpful to teachers. One is, they need foundational knowledge in child development. So most people who went to preschool themselves or have studied early childhood education all know that child development -- being able to design a curriculum; being able to work with children in informal ways, because that's much of what happens in the early childhood classroom -- that that kind of knowledge is critical for teachers.

But what's become clear in recent years is that that's not enough. As we expect our preschool programs to do more than just prepare our children socially, teachers also need to know the content knowledge in areas like math, and science, and social studies to be able to present

children with both the knowledge and the skills that one needs to start off studying those types of topics. And those are not areas that most preschool teachers were trained in, in the past. Predominantly, what one got when one went to a preschool program was child development and curriculum. You weren't necessarily getting pedagogy and those content areas.

And then the third thing that we know is that given who teachers are going to be educating, you need to know how to work with diverse student populations. You need to know how to work with English-language learners, you need to know how to work with special education students, and you need to have had specific content in those areas. It's not enough to have gotten it by osmosis or to get it by being in the classroom. You need to have gotten some kind of content during your years in school.

So what we looked at was whether teachers were getting that kind of content in the preschool programs across the state.

(begin overhead projection presentation)

Come around to the front. It's that green-- The button on the top.

So if people can just-- We could not figure out another way. This is the largest slide of this I've ever--

So what you're seeing here--

Actually, before I get to this exact slide, let me just go back for a second.

So what we found is, we have created, in a very short amount of time-- Remember, New Jersey did not have a specialized early childhood certificate when this started. What students came out of programs with was a nursery through grade eight or Kindergarten through grade eight

certificate. So the people who are coming into the schools now with the P-3 -- this is a brand new program.

Now that has both positives and negatives. On the one hand, it's new and it's not clear whether there's been enough resources to gear up quickly to give people the content they need. On the other hand, it's new, meaning that these programs had access to the latest research in what teachers need to be getting. So what we've been saying, actually, as we talk across the country, is New Jersey is a wonderful test case. Because the fact is, most states are going to be raising the qualifications for preschool teachers in the next decade. And New Jersey provides an opportunity for us to see, is that possible to do quickly? Is it possible to go from a system where teachers really only needed a non-BA degree -- a CDA -- in order to work in the classrooms? Can we quickly go to a system where they need not only a bachelor's degree, but specialized training?

So we interviewed representatives from 12 of the 14 universities and colleges -- four-year universities and colleges that have a P-3 certification program. And I'll get to the community colleges in a minute. And one set of questions we asked them was about their resources. Do they have the faculty needed to support nontraditional students? Because, remember, most people coming and getting a P-3 certificate are not 18-year-olds right out of high school, going straight through a four-year program. Most of these are people who have been working. The average age is about 35. Most of them have families. So one thing that's known about that is people need to have a lot of contact with faculty.

So one of our first questions was, "Do you have the resources needed? What are the ratios of faculty to students?" And what we found is

that, while New Jersey, overall, was doing very well in that area, there's a large variability across universities ranging from one student to every two faculty members, to one to well over a hundred. So one of our concerns was that variability. While, overall, there is -- there are quite a large amount of resources, in terms of skill, in early childhood faculty.

So the second set of questions had to do with content. And as I said, the first area of content we asked about was these foundational course work. And as I hope you can see from this graph, with the yellow line, is schools that required an entire course in these topic areas. So that's the yellow line. The red line is schools that required part of a required course. Which, in early childhood is actually -- most topics are taught in an integrated fashion. So the whole and part are really, kind of, what you want to be looking for. The biggest concern are schools that have the blue line, which don't offer course work in those areas at all.

So the vast majority of schools offer course work, up to a whole course, in things like child development, curriculum development, those things that I said have historically been the foundation of early childhood education. We found very little to be concerned about in this area.

The second set of course work that we asked about is in the content areas.

My printer ran out of ink, so I switched colors on you.  
(laughter)

So these are course work-- These are things like specific courses on literacy, teaching of social studies, teaching of math -- both the pedagogy and the content one needs in these areas. Not surprisingly, literacy -- which is such a push in this state and across the country-- Most teachers got at

least one, if not two, full courses on literacy, which is fabulous. Obviously, that is something that we need teachers to be going into the classroom prepared to do.

We were more concerned when it came to the other content areas. In particular, things like music and art, which anybody who has a young child knows are critical ways that young children learn. Young children learn to read simultaneously, side by side, with when they paint, and they write, and they draw. So a lack of understanding of the arts at the early childhood level is very problematic, in our opinion.

Similarly, math, science, social studies -- things that many, many of our students -- our prospective teachers -- go into college not feeling skilled in-- Remember, most of these are women. The research shows that women enter college already insecure about things like math and science, often. So the fact that they're not getting a substantial amount of course work in those areas was also of concern to us.

The third area that we looked at, as I said, was the area of diversity, which included caring for children with disabilities, working with families, diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and English-language learners. And this was our largest area of concern across the board. Not only do most schools not offer a full course in this topic -- in these topics -- but there are several schools that do not offer course work in these areas at all. And while that's both contrary to the code, it's also not that surprising, given that the faculties, as I'm going to get to in a minute -- the faculty in these schools also did not go through programs that offered a great deal of course work in these areas. So what you've got is a faculty -- teaching a

group of students -- none of whom necessarily have the background in these topic areas to become experts.

So one of our largest concerns was, it's not like you can just regulate this away. One has to begin thinking about what are the resources that are needed to educate and train the faculty, the teacher educators, who are then going to be preparing our preschool teachers who are going to be working with the children in these districts.

As you can see in particular, caring for children with disabilities-- Almost 15 percent of the four-year colleges and universities did not offer a course -- did not require students to take a course in these areas. And English-language learners -- it's a little bit over 20 percent. Both of which were of serious concern to us.

So what does this mean for teachers? Well, the first phase of our study -- we interviewed teachers in the Abbott districts, people who were going through these P-3 -- many of whom were going through these P-3 programs. And we asked them, among other things, what were the topics that they felt least skilled to go into the classroom and implement? What did they not feel prepared in, and what did they feel they needed more course work in? And these two phases of the study completely complemented each other. The evidence supported each other. Because whereas only 20 percent of those teachers said that they needed more course work in child development, close to 80 percent said that they felt like they had not received enough coursework in working with children with special needs. Close to 70 percent said they had not received enough course work with working with English-language learners. And close to 45 percent

said they had not received enough course work in multiculturalism and diversity.

So these findings really mirrored what we found was going on in the schools which, frankly as a teacher educator, is somewhat validating. You feel like if you do give the course, you hope people feel skilled in it. So what these findings are saying is that we're not offering enough of it, and teachers are not coming out of our programs feeling like they know how to implement these things in the classroom.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Doctor, may I ask a question?

DR. LOBMAN: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: You referred to -- on this chart -- behavior management. That's different than the first area that was discussed -- classroom management.

DR. LOBMAN: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Is there a reason for that?

DR. LOBMAN: It was the wording on the questionnaire for the teacher educators. We used the word *classroom* management as the topic of the course, because that's the name given to courses around the country around that. But for teachers, this is much more of the phrasing that they use. So it's more the wording that we used in the questionnaire. But the description of the course-- Behavior management is a very specific type of classroom management. Teachers don't generally make a distinction between that.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: I think it does though. It seems to me there's a significant and empirical difference between what is required to manage a classroom as it is to manage behavior. I think they're distinctly

different. And maybe the most critical skill that a classroom teacher has is the ability to manage the classroom.

DR. LOBMAN: Yes, I would agree. And I also would agree that often, what-- Ideally, we would hope that classroom management is taught as an integrated part of every class that students get.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Right. I point to that only because the rest of the world -- the non-Abbott school districts-- We have 31 Abbott school districts that are mandated to have early childhood education. The rest of the world sees early childhood education as daycare. They don't see it as being structured. They don't understand the structural components. And if we deviate from the whole concept of classroom management, I think it plays into this notion that all we're doing is providing daycare. For schools that are in predominantly urban areas of the state, where there's a poverty issue in many of these cities -- and we're providing daycare for parents rather than education. This is truly an educational component, setting the foundation for future years.

DR. LOBMAN: Yes, I would agree completely. And I think, in the context of the survey itself, that was clear. What people were being asked about was their ability to manage a classroom.

Again, I want to stress that I see classroom management as inseparable, in many ways, from all of the other content areas that you're getting. How you manage a classroom so that children can be learning literacy skills is not exactly the same as how you manage a classroom during gym. They're completely tied to, what are you doing in the classroom, and what are you trying to effect. Are you trying to control children's' behavior, or are you trying to teach them how to work in a social situation?

So I would agree.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: And the curriculum content that's going to be used in that management.

DR. LOBMAN: Yes.

So given this information, one of the questions that we had was, so what are people getting in their professional development? Because if you think about this progression here, what I first showed you is what we found people are getting in their teacher education programs. This is what many teachers in the Abbott districts were saying they need more help in.

So if the third component -- one would want to look at is, are they getting some of the things that they said they didn't feel prepared in once they're in the classroom? Have we provided them with the professional development that fills in those gaps?

I'm going to turn this over to Jill McLaughlin, who's going to fill you in on that aspect of our report.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Thank you, doctor.

**J I L L M c L A U G H L I N:** As Carrie said, we also looked at ongoing professional development, both with regard to how teachers were being educated beyond the in-service component of teacher preparation. And also, it's been identified in research that professional -- ongoing professional development increases both the knowledge base and the skills of teachers, such as planning and implementing developmentally appropriate curriculum, and also how to work with diverse groups of children and families.

As there's little information about the ongoing system of professional development for early childhood teachers, we sought to learn

what professional development opportunities were being afforded to the preschool teachers in New Jersey. And what we did was, we conducted interviews, both with the two- and four-year institutions. There was a component of the interview that related to ongoing professional development. We also interviewed district representatives from the Abbott districts and the Early Childhood Program Aid districts -- which are the 102 other districts that receive early childhood education -- and also each of the 17 county resource and referral agencies. So that's who participated in this.

And in New Jersey, professional-- What we found was, in New Jersey, the professional development opportunities were being provided for preschool teachers by -- both in district and by each of the county resource and referral agencies. And also, some of the community colleges were also offering ongoing professional development for the teachers. And we know that preschool teachers in this state are required to take at least 105 professional development hours within the five-year period. And also, their districts are required to submit an annual operation plan that includes provisions for professional development. So that's just a little--

SENATOR RICE: I have a question. When you said professional development, that includes the previous slide?

MS. McLAUGHLIN: No. What Carrie had spoken about was teacher preparation -- what teachers were being -- students were being provided with in their community college and four-year university coursework. And now-- The preservice-- Now what I'm speaking about is what teachers are getting once they're teaching the classroom, what the districts are providing them with regard to the professional development hours, like workshops and--

SENATOR RICE: In-service.

The reason I raised that is because, looking at the previous chart, it seems to me the basics that we all get in school, that we're comfortable with-- It seems to me that, from the area of assessment all the way down to technology, there were some uncomfort levels, which tells me that those coming in feel they need more of that, which means those already in don't have enough of it.

MS. McLAUGHLIN: Right.

SENATOR RICE: And the question is, is the in-service professional training taking a look at providing those things that those coming in feel is needed?

MS. McLAUGHLIN: And that's exactly what we wanted to learn.

SENATOR RICE: Oh, okay.

MS. McLAUGHLIN: That's exactly it. Especially with the areas of the P-3 certification, with the areas of diversity, working with students with special needs and bilingual students that were also down in the bottom part, along with technology.

And what we found was-- One of our major findings was that, while there were -- there were many professional development opportunities provided for these teachers, with over 2,200 workshops being offered the year prior to the data collection. We did find, again, that too few workshops were being offered in the areas of multiculturalism, diversity, working with families, and working with students with special needs. And you see, down there also, transitioning to Kindergarten -- that also on the bottom. So this is what we found overall.

Specifically, we found that the largest percentage of workshops -- 20 percent -- were being offered in specific content area. And you see the top bar and the third bar are both related to curriculum content. So they make up the whole top part.

Health and safety issues was the second most offered workshop. There were 368 workshops offered in health and safety. What was interesting was that 300 of those -- 300 of the 368 were offered by the county resource and referral agencies. So that was a clear priority of the resource and referral agencies, and then going down as such. And you see, conversely, only 3 percent of the workshops addressed diversity topics, including multiculturalism, diversity, and ESL, which mirrors what Carrie said. That's what we actually found.

And then what we did was, we looked further at the actual agencies that provide professional development. And what we found was -- with the districts, the community colleges, and R and Rs -- and we found that the resource and referral agencies are providing significantly more training across content areas than either the districts or the community colleges. And we also found that any given resource and referral agency covers more topics and provides more workshops in particular topic areas than either the school districts or community colleges. And you see there, the resource and referral agencies -- 100 percent of them offer workshops in the areas of behavior management, curriculum, health and safety, and working with families.

DR. LOBMAN: Can I interrupt you for one second, Jill?

MS. McLAUGHLIN: Sure.

DR. LOBMAN: Those resource and referral agencies are those agencies that have historically been responsible for early childhood professional development, given they were the ones responsible for childcare centers. So they've got a much longer history of providing professional development in these areas than the districts have, which is one of the reasons we think they probably had this strength. And they've just got a much larger network of professional development providers that they've been working with over the years.

MS. McLAUGHLIN: And you'll see also in the chart -- in the areas of diversity, 82 percent of the R and Rs were providing workshops in that area, while only a third of the districts and a quarter of the community colleges offered workshops in that area.

And another one of our-- The other major finding, with regard to this, was that there was no coordinated system of early childhood professional development. While each of the three major entities providing professional development are offering many opportunities for preschool teachers to take advantage of workshops, findings from the report implied that little dialogue is taking place among the three entities coordinating professional development so that it might be most effective and efficient.

And given the large number of districts, we were struck by the lack of partnership. Though there were some partnerships, there were not many. And the partnerships that did exist ranged from meeting together to talk about future collaboration to-- In some districts, there was an entire master's program offered by a university within a district. So there was a wide range of partnerships that did exist.

And given the large number of nontraditional students -- nontraditional preschool teachers seeking higher qualifications, we were particularly interested in discovering what partnerships would enable students to take for-credit course work within their districts. And with regard to for-credit partnerships, we found that 11 of the two- and four-year colleges were partnering with other agencies.

And while a number of community colleges have agreements with four-year universities offered in the districts, what was most striking was the small percent of districts that actually benefit from the outreach and partnerships, with only nine districts in partnerships with the two- and four-year schools. And that has such a small impact in the partnerships for those teachers.

SENATOR RICE: I'm sorry.

MS. McLAUGHLIN: That's okay.

SENATOR RICE: Through the Chair, could you provide us with a list of those institutions as partnering versus those who are not partnering?

We're talking New Jersey, right?

DR. LOBMAN: Yes. This was a research study, and as such, the participants have anonymity. We can give numbers, but we can't give names.

SENATOR RICE: Can you give us counties? (laughter)

DR. LOBMAN: No.

MS. McLAUGHLIN: And then just finally, with regard to non-credit partnerships, 22 of the districts said that they partnered with the county resource and referral agencies to provide professional development

training. And only 11 of the 90 districts that we interviewed said that they had partnered with another district.

So those are the findings for professional development.

And now I'm going to--

DR. LOBMAN: I left something out.

MS. McLAUGHLIN: Now I'm going to call back Carrie.

DR. LOBMAN: I just realized that I had left out an important piece of our study on the professional -- on the teacher preparation that's going to come up again later, which is a comparison between the two-year schools and the four-year schools. Historically, early childhood -- a lot of early childhood education happened at the community college level, prior to people needing the BA. That's where much of the training--

So we interviewed people from both schools. And this slide is a comparison in those topic areas -- and the content first -- between the four- and the two-year schools in how many schools provided a full course -- this is just a full course -- in these topics. So, again, not surprisingly, given that literacy is required in the four-year program, the four-year schools have a much higher percentage of -- offer a full required course. But of interest, I think, is the fact that in the areas of math, and music, and art especially -- if you look at this -- there's a real strength in the community colleges that we felt strongly needed to begin to be tapped into, as we go into this next period.

And, similarly, in the area of diversity, the community colleges have a real strength in requiring a full course in working with children with special needs, in particular. So we just--

While, obviously, there's a big difference between these programs-- And the four-year schools have much stronger limitations on how-- Remember, they only have the 30 credits that people can get in education at all, because the majority of the program is in liberal arts. So it's not comparable. It is somewhat comparing apples and oranges. But what was of real interest to us is that there are these courses being offered at the community college level.

Thank you.

I'm going to bring up Cynthia Rice, from the Association for Children of New Jersey. She is going to talk to us about how she's used some of our findings, and where we go from here.

MS. RICE: Good morning, everyone. And thank you for the opportunity to come and speak to you today about the work that we've been doing; and for, really, coming to speak at this beautiful Abbott early childhood center.

Before I start to talk about the policy angle of this, I just-- I really thought it was important to mention the good news that came out about 10 days ago, from a report from the Early Learning Improvement Consortium, on a report called "Giant Steps for the Littlest Children: Progress in the Sixth Year of the Abbott Preschool Program." This report indicated that there's been significant progress in Abbott preschool programs, both in terms of classroom quality and student preparation for Kindergarten.

Just some of the highlights-- The original 30 Abbott districts participated, and the average classroom quality scores have risen 20 percent from 2003. In just two years, the percentage of classroom quality scores in

the good to excellent range have gone up from 13 percent in 2003 to nearly 40 percent in 2005. And in this school year, 85 percent of the classrooms scored above the midpoint in quality -- on the quality -- classroom environment, compared to only 15 percent in 2003-2004.

Teacher process scores -- that's the factors that teachers actually influence -- have improved 29 percent since 2000, really demonstrating the need -- the importance of well-trained, highly qualified teachers. And the environment scores, which -- those items that are directly related to physical environment on the classroom -- have improved 16 percent since 2000. Now, that's an increase, but certainly much slower than the teacher process scores. And that is linked to facilities. And I've been before you talking about preschool facilities. So that's really no surprise.

Soon after retiring, Justice Gary Stein -- who was on the New Jersey Supreme Court -- told our Executive Director, Cecilia Zalkind, there's a lot of naysayers about Abbott, and we need evidence that the programs are making a difference in the lives of Abbott preschoolers. I think, for the first time, this report provides -- not only for Justice Stein, but all of us -- that evidence -- that there's evidence that it supports what research has always indicated: that quality preschool experiences will not only prepare children for Kindergarten, but they will make a long-term difference in the lives of our youngest citizens. There's so much negativity about Abbott. This was really good news. My heels were clicking the day this report came out.

Recently, I had an opportunity to speak at the National Education Writers Association's-- I sat on a panel with someone from Georgia, where they've had universal preschool for 10 years. And someone

-- David Harris (phonetic spelling), who was the former editor of the *Orlando Sentinel*, who's really leading the pack for preschool in Florida, as they begin their first attempt -- their first year, in September, for universal preschool. David Harris got up and said, "If we could do Abbott, we'd do Abbott."

So I think with all its warts, and with all its issues, we are at the cutting edge, nationally, on what quality preschool should look like. I don't think it's said enough, because there's so many issues. But all-- So many other states look to the Abbott preschool program to say this is how it should be done.

Now, that doesn't mean our job is complete. We've heard a lot of information today about teacher preparation. That's the years that the teachers are -- the students are in school learning at the university and community college level, and at the professional development level.

So from a policy perspective, what does all of this mean? First, the teacher preparation and professional development programs -- opportunities really seem to be covering the major content areas that provide both prospective or existing early childhood teachers with the important skills that are needed to be successful in the preschool classroom. Those classroom environment scores didn't go up by magic. The higher quality of the Abbott programs is evidence that the systems that prepare and support our preschool teachers are doing a good job. So we know from this report that the core is good. But along the periphery, we've got a few issues.

Our policy brief, which is a blue-- Our policy brief lists a bunch of both the issues and recommendations. But I really just wanted to focus

today on some of the critical ones that I thought you, as the Abbott Subcommittee, would be interested in.

So what are the issues, and what do we recommend to ensure that every preschool -- qualified preschool teacher receives the tools that they need to be a quality teacher? The first issue-- It seems that New Jersey's higher education institutions are currently offering coursework in child development and curriculum content. And that's good, but it seems that it's at the expense of other content areas such as Carrie said, math and social studies, and also diversity issues: special education and English-language learners. They're not being adequately covered either in the teacher preparation program or professional development. And we know this from both the report that -- both reports that Carrie talked about -- is that we've looked at, from the -- within the institutions and seen that those courses aren't being adequately covered. And, more importantly, we've heard from the teachers that said, "You know what? We're coming into our classrooms not adequately prepared in these areas." So that's very, very significant.

And this information really has some serious implications. For those programs-- The first one is, for those programs that aren't including this coursework at all, either in whole or in part, there's a potential violation of State regulations that require part of the 30 credit hours for education methodology to include educating special needs and linguistically diverse students. So there's an issue on whether there's compliance with regulatory standards.

But a broader issue -- because there's only just a few schools that fall into this -- is that this is really problematic in a state as diverse as

New Jersey. The 2000 census indicated that New Jersey's population is more diverse than ever, with large increases of persons from both Hispanic and Asian origin. And according to the latest population projections, this growth will only continue. And while white and African-American populations will moderately grow, other race populations are expected to continue at the rate of 150 percent. New Jersey's Hispanic population will continue to increase -- will continue to grow and maintain its status as the largest minority group in our state. We need to ensure that both our teacher preparation and professional development systems adequately prepare our teachers to meet the diversity challenges in our preschool classrooms.

So what's the recommendation? Well, certainly, the broader brush recommendation is for those institutions that are not complying with the regulations -- they need to be complying.

Now, there are reasons given why some coursework isn't being offered. And it all is based around this 30-credit cap. But the fact remains that a few programs are not complying with the regulations. And the bigger institutions that are-- The bigger issue is that the institutions aren't adequately preparing our teachers.

And this existing problem cannot be remedied, really, without leadership, particularly from the institutions of higher education. These leaders have to collaborate with the Department of Education to ensure that they are complying with the State regulations but, more importantly, better preparing the teachers to meet the tough issues that confront teachers and preschool teachers every day in the classrooms.

We are urging our institutions of higher education to take a look at their own programs and see where changes are warranted and really begin that process. While these findings, to us, are really significant-- But there seems to be no outside pressure other than us for the institutions of higher education to initiate this thoughtful review of their programs.

Now, the other very, very large issue, which is in the larger report, deals about articulation. The second issue is that articulation and partnerships between the two- and four-year colleges are institution-specific, with some colleges not participating in any form of collaboration.

Now, what we know nationally is that transcript studies are showing that 50 percent of our nation's teachers, who are currently in the teaching workforce, attended community college for at least a part of their education. So it's clear that community colleges play a critical role in preparing our teachers for the classroom. But even knowing this, significant barriers continue to exist between -- in the development of a seamless articulation system between our two-year colleges and our four-year institutions.

And this problem is particularly troublesome when you're talking about training preschool teachers. So many of these teachers would be considered nontraditional, with the average -- from a report done last year by the Graduate School -- the average teacher is a female, approximately 38 years of age, working full-time while attending school. And many have begun or are now beginning their education at the local community college level.

A few months ago, I spoke to a preschool teacher who is not in an Abbott district, and not in an Early Childhood Program Aid district. So

she is not entitled to scholarship dollars through the New Jersey Professional Development Center to pay for her tuition. She said, “You know, I’ve been teaching for 20 years. I’m a single parent. I have a lot of experience. I have my child development associate’s degree,” which is a non-bachelor degree, “and I’ve attended lots of professional development programs over the years.” But she knew she had to return to school. The writing is on the wall, at least in this state. Incrementally, we’re moving slowly towards universal preschool -- between Abbott, Early Childhood Program Aid, Early Launch to Learning initiative. We are moving that way. So she saw the writing on the wall. And she said, “You know what? I don’t have the money to pay for a four-year institution. I’ve got to stay at the community college for as long as possible, because the tuition is lower there. I can’t work full-time, go to school. And I’m a single parent.”

So we’re going to have to-- Our state is moving forward towards universal preschool. And we’re going to have to look at teachers, like this women -- ask whether our New Jersey -- our system of higher education is functioning at a level that ensures that she and others like her have access to early childhood programs and are, indeed, obtaining a quality education.

The reality is that we are going to need to tap into every resource available to ensure that we have enough qualified teachers to meet the ever-growing demand. But for many, our existing system of articulation is a really big problem. As we watch preschool New Jersey continue to grow, we frankly can’t afford to lose one prospective preschool teacher because of, frankly, a system that needs fixing.

There have been huge strides taken since the Abbott VI decision in 2000, requiring that all preschool teachers obtain -- new preschool teachers obtain their preschool through third grade endorsement. I don't want to take away from that. There really have been.

In your packets, there's a report on a wonderful success story on articulation. And after I speak, you're going to hear from someone who is really the co-founder of that articulation system between a community college and a four-year institution.

But while there have been pockets of good, collaborative work, the change has been because of people bringing about, not because of systemic reform. And when we're talking about training a much larger workforce than what currently exists, it's really-- Systemic reform is the only answer.

So our recommendation is that we have to look, first, for better partnerships between these two entities, and to standardize articulation agreements for all two- and four-year colleges. This is a big order for a state -- for institutions of higher education who really tend to work independently of one another. And we don't have a department of higher education any longer. And this is too complex an issue to talk about in a few minutes. But with more than 50 percent of our nation's teachers beginning in community colleges, and with so many of our preschool teachers beginning there, that are nontraditional -- the need for more preschool teachers is only going to increase -- we need a seamless system of articulation that better meets the needs of students.

I've heard from administrators in higher education, both at the community college and at the four-years, and they say, "Oh, we have

articulation agreements.” And I say to them, “You know what? You have them, but ask your students how well they work when they’re trying to transfer from a community college to a four-year institution.” Some of them work better than others. Some of them are horror -- can be horror stories.

So for those who have those agreements, there seems to be major issues. In many instances, the agreements have not solved the problem they were intended to fix, but often made it more difficult. And that leads to a waste of time on the student’s end, and more important -- especially when there’s scholarship dollars involved -- is a waste of taxpayers’ money.

One way is to look at the curriculum at both the community colleges and the four-year institutions, and align them -- either course-by-course, or program-by-program, or by outcomes. This will make the transfer process easier for nontraditional students, while ensuring that the content knowledge is being adequately addressed. No one wants the programs to be of a lower quality. We’re talking about access.

Other states have been far more effective than New Jersey in systemically addressing this issue. And while New Jersey is on the cutting edge of quality preschool programs, our State really has not been a leader in developing systems for getting our teachers to that quality level.

I just want to briefly mention what Jill talked about -- professional development on the other end. It’s that we have three basic entities that are implementing professional development opportunities -- three major ones: the school districts, the resource and referral agencies, and some community colleges. They are working in virtual isolation of each

other. There's a lot of wonderful course offerings, or program offerings. But many of them are the same. And while we did not -- this study did not look at the depth and the breath of what's being offered, we have to look at what -- so many of one -- a certain area of coursework -- is being offered. And there are other areas -- English-language learners, special education, multiculturalism -- that are not being offered in adequate -- the offerings are inadequate.

So we're hoping that-- We're looking for a regional approach to these three entities getting together -- they have traditionally worked separate from each other -- for two things. One is to ensure that the taxpayer dollars are effectively being spent. And just as important is that there are opportunities for those areas that teachers feel they need professional development in -- are being offered to them, to ensure that what goes on in their classroom is of the highest quality and so that people throughout the nation continue to say, "If we could do it like Abbott, we'd do it like Abbott."

I want to introduce one of the articulation gurus of our state, Adriana Flores Kuhn, who is from Hudson County Community College, just to talk a little bit about some of the issues that she sees. Hudson, obviously, is located in Jersey City, not only an Abbott district, but many of her students are working in Abbott preschool settings.

SENATOR RICE: Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Yes.

SENATOR RICE: While the speaker is coming up, let me make some observations here, because I've been involved with this for a long time, since its inception. And I just want to say--

First of all, the presentations are very good and educational. But when we started this, if you can remember, we had preschool. And the preschool was set up by the Federal government to deal with cognitive skills. And see, it's a whole different scenario. But you also had daycare facilities. And the argument that those of us who were at the forefront of this debate -- was a couple of things that were important to us.

We had people who know more about children than the academias knew -- would ever know. Because all they did was work with these kids in daycares. But they were babysitting. So it's not really the cognitive skills.

When we made the changes, the folks who could handle children better, and understood children better, were about to lose their jobs. And to be quite frank, they were mostly women and minorities from the urban settings. And we said no, and we argued the case for certification, and what you need, and how you get it. And we even argued we had to extend time, because the timeframes wouldn't allow people to work and do it. And so that's the first wave that came in.

And so it seems to me now that some of those folks went on as we expected, from certification -- with nothing, to certification, to college degree. Getting the time in the system -- they're not going to go any further. So we need to except that and live with that. Because it's through their productivity -- and taking advantage of the certification -- that we probably have the numbers to where they are today.

But I am concerned about who is coming into the system. Because someone not in the system right now is not in jeopardy of losing their job, or tenure, or the kinds of things that came with it.

And I'm also concerned -- and we need to have more discussion on this. I'm very much concerned about the alignment, because, before we even talk about preschool, there are those of us who always talk about alignments when they kept knocking out community colleges for a four-year institution. Then the cost went up here, and everything started coming back the other way. And yet, when you finish the two-year institution, you're supposed to have an agreement, and they don't accept most of what you have, you're right back where you started. So alignment, to me, becomes very important.

I'm in a position where I really want to force the partnership piece. That's why I wanted to know who was doing what. Because I know that these institutions, on their own volition, (indiscernible) the time, for whatever reason, depending on where they're located, will not do a true partnership. And it's something we need to think about mandating, and opening that debate up, and compel that. Because I think if we do that, then we're going to take the numbers even higher. I believe, right now, just listening to the statistics, that those numbers are going to increase again next year, even with what we have.

So it becomes clear to me that if we compel some things -- and I think that's what government needs to do sometimes, since we pay anyway -- that we're going to get up in the 90 and 100 percent range over a period of years.

And the final thing is that we can never lose the debate on school construction, because we talk about school construction, and we keep thinking about the elementary schools. But we need to make sure that these facilities-- Because part of the argument, when we discussed this was,

“We don’t have enough money to build new, early childhood education centers.” And I said, “We don’t have to. Most of the population we’re trying to address are in daycare facilities.” So the idea was to keep what you have, give them the tools and upgrade, and bring in what you don’t have to make the system work. And upgrade facilities if you have to. But government, as it is, with these biases, if you will -- and in some cases, lack of knowledge or lack of concern -- has always been a barrier.

I believe with Assemblyman Vas being on board, and others who have come into the Legislature now representing diverse districts-- We understand it better. And I think if we continue to communicate -- it doesn’t mean we’re going to agree on everything. But I think we’re going to strike the right balance for legislation.

As Assemblyman Vas, the Chairman, indicated -- is that, as a Committee, we don’t do education -- we don’t do legislation. What we do collectively is take information, develop that legislation, introduce it to the proper committees, and then we’re on the forefront of it. And we get pretty good attention, as the Joint Committee, because we’re statutory to oversee Abbotts. And so we get listened to, one way or another.

So I just wanted to say those things.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Senator, I think you made an excellent point on the issue of alignment between your two-year and your four-year universities. As we deliberate the final adoption of the budget -- and I know that there’s discussion currently going on about extending the New Jersey STARS program to the four-year program, providing our high school students that graduate with B+ averages, and greater, free tuition in the community college, and now extending that so they can complete their

four-year education. Perhaps that's the opportunity to get all the stakeholders at the table and talk about this alignment issue, so that if the State is going to pay for the tuition -- that we can ensure that we're advancing the curriculum needs from the two-year to the four-year universities. I think that's an outstanding point.

Okay, Ms. Kuhn -- Adriana.

**ADRIANA FLORES KUHN:** Thank you very much for your enlightened comments. We've been looking for this for a long time. And I know you will share what Senator Rice has said and you have said with your colleagues as well, too, which will move us forward even more rapidly.

I am a professor of early childhood education. I teach; I am not a researcher. And so, today, what I would like to do is give you a personal look at those students that we have been talking about in abstract; who they are, how they reach the community college, and what they benefit from it, as well as some of the barriers that they encounter in going through.

In 1999, as you all know, with the Abbott ruling, teachers in child care centers, who were then designated by contract to be Abbott centers, needed to return to college or to go to college in order to keep their jobs and improve their professional standing. We received, at Hudson, about 48 of these -- primarily women, mid-life, very heavily burdened with families, and some even carried a second job and a full-time position in their own child care centers, now becoming Abbott schools. Of these 48 -- after four years we graduated about 18 with an associate's degree. And all 18 did go on to a four-year college. Last Thursday we graduated the last of the 48 teachers to continue on. They, of course, did not keep their jobs as

teachers. But they did stay, they did maintain employment within the centers that they were working in as assistant teachers.

These particular teachers have been followed by other waves of employed teachers. Head Start had a similar mandate to move their teachers who did not have bachelor's degrees towards bachelor's degrees. We have consistently received Head Start teachers.

Two-and-a-half years ago, we received over 300 -- almost close to 400 paraprofessionals from the various Title I school districts in Hudson County who then needed to move their professional training towards 48 credits, or an associate's degree. So constantly, we have been working with paraprofessionals from the community who then needed to improve their skills in order to keep their jobs. Many of them entered the classroom kicking and screaming. And many of our initial classes became sounding boards for these paraprofessionals who did not see themselves as students, initially; who did not have the time to be students, initially; and who, themselves, faced very formidable barriers. Many of them had to enter ESL classes to learn English. Almost all of them -- 98 percent -- had to enter some basic skills courses in literacy and math in order to improve those skills and move on to college-level courses. That meant that that extended their time at college even longer.

Their average graduation time is not two years, it's four years, carrying a job, working with their own families, and nurturing the families of the children that they work with, as well.

These teachers, who we have worked with, have also brought with them other people from their community. Hudson County Community College is designated -- has a Federal designation of an HSI

institution. We are a Hispanic-serving institution. We are 98 percent minority. We serve a wide variety of minorities, the largest number being Hispanic. The students enter into our teacher education programs with formidable barriers, the same as the teachers who come from the community child care centers.

Yet, they do prevail. And the reason that they prevail at Hudson, as well as other community colleges, is because our classes are smaller. We offer biology in classes of no larger than 28 to 30. If you look at most four-year institutions, an introductory biology class would be over 100. We also offer the opportunity for those students to get to know their teachers. Our class average size is around 25 to 28.

We offer intensive advisement, which we find has been supported by the research in that teachers who are working towards certification are facing a very convoluted path. It is not easy to find out information about certification. It is not easy to achieve certification. And so advisors who can help students with -- understand that path and get there more efficiently, will help them to achieve their goals in a more efficient manner.

Our students also lead very complex lives, mirroring, again, the same kinds of lives as the community child care center professionals moving towards a degree. They have families, they are nontraditional students. They, oftentimes, have full-time jobs. They are also -- 78 percent at Hudson County have some form of financial aid or scholarship -- Abbott scholarship; New Jersey STARS; the OK2 program, which is from the Jersey City Teachers Association. They also receive TAG, as well as Pell Grants. Taxpayers' money--

The greatest barrier that they receive, after they successfully overcome all these other barriers, is then transferring. Hudson enjoys a very nice relationship with NJCU and their early childhood program. We have a model articulation program. Our program is what would be called a *duel admission*. When they are admitted at Hudson, they are also admitted at NJCU. And they transfer seamlessly, meaning they lose no credit, and they achieve junior status, as long as they have satisfied the requirements of the 2.75 grade point average, having gotten a B- or better in their education courses -- early childhood education courses -- and followed the curriculum as specified.

That's a very great privilege for about 137 students who graduated last week and who will move on to NJCU. And the statistics indicate -- those students who move on -- 90 percent will graduate from the four-year college; 90 percent or better, which is a very good statistic and exceeds national average.

The problem is that some of those students want to go to Montclair, or Kean, or move to another portion of the state, and they find that they cannot do that easily. They lose credits. We offer, at Hudson, courses to our students -- our early childhood students -- in special ed, in multicultural education and diversity, as well as the learning -- the English-language learning and literacy courses. They'll lose all of those credits. They won't count towards those bachelor's degrees, even though they will have it professionally.

Our concern is, this person, this student that we meet, that we get to know personally -- who comes into my office and is absolutely emotional about the fact that they are the first person in their family to ever

try to go to college -- they try to make sense of what the semester means to them; how to study when they have a baby at home; how to make sense of a system that says that they have to go to college to take courses that don't earn them college credits, such as the basic skills courses; how to move through a system that may not even be in their home language; how to write cohesive papers in sociology, and psychology, and in every other subject they will take, while they are still learning the English language. These students struggle. They struggle mightily. They are bright people. The women, primarily -- but an increasing number of men -- entering into our programs are bright people. They have had the bad luck of being poor -- of being born poor, of being an immigrant to this country, and of also having sometimes an inferior education preparing them for the college experience.

The students also come with an enormous respect for the teaching profession. These are people who believe that becoming a teacher is the pinnacle of success. They view teachers as being contributors to their community. And their culture values a teacher very highly. This is something that we, oftentimes, don't see in some of the suburban community colleges, where becoming a teacher may not raise the economic status of the student. But in the areas of urban living and community colleges in the urban areas, those cultures who are immigrating to those areas do view teaching as a very worthwhile and worthy profession. They want to become teachers. But they face barriers, not the least of which is what Cynthia Rice has already enumerated, and that is articulation.

We have had some committees that have worked with the four-year colleges -- the two- and four-year colleges for many years on this issue.

We feel we need to move to another step, and your help will certainly -- and guidance will certainly help us in reaching that level.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Thank you.

Senator Rice.

SENATOR RICE: Isn't the problem compounded for illegal immigrants, children of? One of the concerns I have is that we want people in the system. And if I came from any place, Brazil, it doesn't make a difference-- I had no say-so in that.

And the thing that bothers me the most is a youngster is in the public school system. Everybody knows that youngster is in the public school system. They've been there from grade one; they graduate. They understand that it's important to be, in this case, a teacher (indiscernible) certification. Then, all of a sudden, you get this certification, but in order to go to our institutions, you're paying, like, out-of-state tuitions -- it's almost twice the dollars to go.

Do you see that as part of the problem in Hudson?

MS. FLORES KUHN: Yes, we do. We even give them a label. They are called the 1.5 generation. They are the generation that immigrated to this country either as a very young child and had their education in our schools, or are the first generation of very culturally bound parents from another country. And, yes, they do have some problems. Not the least of which is economic.

The New Jersey STARS program is going to help these students immeasurably, because many of them are very high achieving. It's just that they come from poor families. And in Jersey City, we have seen many

students benefit from the OK2 program, which allows any student who graduates from a Jersey City public school to go on to a community college for free -- first two years.

Many of our students take advantage, also, of TAG and Pell, especially now that they can do so part-time. Until recently, they had to carry 12 credit, which is what the normal credit load is for most of our students. However, some do opt to go part-time in order to be able to support themselves and help support their families. And so the part-time opportunity with either -- I believe it's the TAG grant -- the State grant -- is allowing them to do that.

I'm sorry, did I answer your question?

SENATOR RICE: Yes. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Thank you.

And I think our final speaker today, before we open it to the floor for new business, is Dr. Nancy Lauter.

Doctor.

**NANCY LAUTER, Ed.D.:** Good morning.

Again, thank you to the Committee for giving me an opportunity to speak. And, again, I want to congratulate you and Elizabeth for this beautiful building that's here to provide quality learning experiences for young children and their families.

And it just reminds me, sitting here in this lovely space, that Maria Montessori was one of the first educators who talked about the very special sensibilities of young children. And given that they learn in very multisensory kinds of ways, the importance of having an aesthetically

pleasing environment in which to be -- is crucial. So they've got it here, and that's terrific.

Again, I'm Nancy Lauter. I'm at Montclair State University. I'm Professor and Chair in the Department of Early Childhood, Elementary and Literacy Education. And my remarks this morning are focused on the current teacher certification for preschool through third grade teachers and the way the State, if you will, has defined that certification. And I do believe that my remarks relate directly to both the issues of the quality of our teachers and what Senator Rice raised -- the question earlier -- who's coming into the system.

As you know, about five years ago, the State created a preschool through third grade teacher certification. Clearly, that was a very positive move, following states like New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and many others around the country that recognize the importance of an instructional certificate focused on preschool and the primary grades. As we all, in this room, know, these are the most important years for learning the habits of mind related to reading, writing, listening, problem solving, etc.

However, the teacher of preschool through third grade certificate does not reflect the rights and responsibilities of other instructional certificates such as the K-5, or the P-12 content area.

I want to share with you three examples of what I see as inequities in this certification that, clearly, deprive this P-3 certificate the status and value that it deserves.

First of all, teacher candidates in New Jersey, as mandated by our Federal No Child Left Behind Act, are required to pass a State identified practice test as part of their licensure requirements. However,

New Jersey has not identified an appropriate practice test for early childhood education. Again, the code, as it reads, lists that P-3 candidates must pass an appropriate State test, but none has been designated. We have not been instructed what test our P-3 teachers should be completing.

Again, practice to -- tests exist. In fact, I found at least three that focus specifically on early childhood education. So the outcome of this is that, technically, our P-3 teachers teaching in public schools do not meet the highly qualified teacher requirements. They do not meet either the State or Federal law of passing an, again, identified standardized test. Obviously, the recommendation would be that New Jersey quickly identify a test that is appropriate for our P-3 candidates.

Secondly -- and this to me is most interesting, again, given other testimony we've heard this morning -- the new code that was passed in 2004 -- the Department of Education Administrative Code requires that teacher candidates, for its teacher of students with disabilities certification, obtain a general education instructional certificate before they add on -- again, this certificate for teachers of children with special needs. Again, a good move. It clearly moves us forward towards thinking about inclusive strategies for children -- and that special educators should know general education, as well as the special education strategies. And as we've heard, that should go in both directions.

Institutions of higher ed, such as mine this year, were given some financial support in developing dual certification to make it possible for students to come and obtain a P-3 certificate and move directly on, or in the same program, receive the teacher of students with disabilities-- This is also possible for the K-5 and the content-area certificate.

However, we have been instructed by the Department of Education that those students -- P-3 students who already have, in hand, a P-3 teacher certification, a standard certification, cannot add on a teacher of students with disabilities endorsement. We heard this morning that an area that all of our teachers need, but certainly our teachers of young children, is an area of knowing more about special needs and how to provide interventions for children with special needs. We also know that the earlier we can do that, the younger we can provide -- implement interventions for a young child with special needs, the better his or her outcomes will be in the end.

SENATOR RICE: Excuse me, Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Yes, Senator.

SENATOR RICE: I'm confused.

DR. LAUTER: Yes, me too.

SENATOR RICE: You're saying the Department of Education is saying you can't add on?

DR. LAUTER: Excuse me?

SENATOR RICE: The Department of Education is saying you cannot add on?

DR. LAUTER: Correct. For a teacher who has a teaching license, there is a program -- basically, we call it a *second certification*. So if you hold a license in elementary, or math, etc., you can go back to college and add, I think it's now approximately 21 credits, and get your teacher of students with disabilities.

For some reason -- and, again, I cannot understand it. And when we called the State, of course we're just told, "That's the way it is."

They have told us that a teacher of preschool through third grade cannot return to school and get a second certification in teacher of students with disabilities.

SENATOR RICE: Okay.

Through the Chair, the staff, could you raise that issue and ask that through the Subcommittee Chair and through the Committee, someone tell us why? It doesn't make any sense to me from any perspective. If it's a dollar and cents issue, it still doesn't make any sense. I just need to know, because you always want to add to--

DR. LAUTER: Exactly.

SENATOR RICE: At least that's what I thought.

DR. LAUTER: And you certainly-- As we've heard this morning, we have folks who are coming in now to higher ed who have become students. And they're energized. And many of them do want to go on.

SENATOR RICE: My concern is the first presentation -- and it goes back to those bars. I'm trying to figure out from an assessment down here -- is where the teachers who are in the system say there's a problem.

And what you're indicating is that before they get that far in the system -- or if they're in the system -- just come in the system, they can't add on. I just have a problem with that. And that needs to be raised as a real query.

DR. LAUTER: If you could find out--

SENATOR RICE: Oh, we're going to find out.

DR. LAUTER: That's wonderful.

SENATOR RICE: We can find out. Maybe you can't find out, but we can find out.

DR. LAUTER: And in some ways, this also relates to my last point. And maybe this will give you a little insight.

My third point-- According, again, to the latest code, January 2004, P-3 certified teachers are not eligible to add an additional endorsement to their license by passing a designated practice exam.

Let me explain this. If I am a math teacher-- I've got a certification in mathematics that happens to be a P-12 certification. I've been teaching eleventh grade mathematics for five years. I decide I want to teach third grade. I take the elementary practice exam. Abracadabra, now I have my elementary certification, which is a K-5 certification.

If I'm a P-3 teacher-- I've been teaching second grade for five years. I decide I'd like to teach fifth grade. I cannot take the elementary practice and be eligible to teach fifth grade.

SENATOR RICE: Without doing what?

DR. LOBMAN: Going back to school.

DR. LAUTER: Exactly. Without going back to -- a program -- in essence a K-5 elementary program. We have one certification that's P-3. And that P-3 certification is a preschool through third grade certification. We now have -- and this has been a fairly recent change -- we now have a Kindergarten through fifth grade certification. I'm saying, it's much harder for me, as a P-3 teacher, to teach fourth or fifth grade -- to add on a elementary certification -- than it is for a high school math teacher.

And my biggest concern -- and there are many people in the audience who have heard me talk about this before-- My biggest concern is

about the -- I don't know how to say it -- status of the P-3 certification. Somehow, the State is defining it, given these concerns, as something marginal. Somehow it is not carrying the same status as a K-5 or content area cert.

So when I have a student come to me and say, "Children, and the way they develop-- I want to work with young children." "Okay. It sounds to me like you want a preschool through third grade certification. That will give you the best focus on how young children learn and develop." And she says, "Well, I talked to my parents," or, "Somebody told me, if I do a P-3, then I can't do all these other things; I can't add on the special needs. I can't, later on, decide I want to teach fifth grade. So I better do the K-5, or I better do a content area cert."

Again, somehow we're sending a message to our next generation. You asked who's coming into the system. Who's coming into our P-3 certs? We're sending a very strong message that they're not quite in the mainstream. And I think that's a tremendous -- again, puts our youngest children somehow at risk. And as I say -- is making this certification less accessible, in some ways, to a lot of people.

SENATOR RICE: It somewhat contradicts what we are trying to do.

DR. LAUTER: I think it does.

SENATOR RICE: And we're going to straighten that out.

DR. LAUTER: Oh, I'm so excited.

Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity.

And I will leave a set of my comments.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Yes, thank you.

Is there anyone here from the DOE that can address those concerns?

Jessica.

**JESSICA GORTON deKONINCK:** I'm not sure that I can address all the concerns, because I don't have the regs in front of me. And I'm not familiar enough. So I'm just sort of-- And we'll get Melanie all the information in detail.

I think there may be some confusion around the new certification and licensing procedure. It did just go into effect. There is-- It is not generally the rule that you can simply take a practice, once you've got an original endorsement, and get an additional endorsement. You may need additional coursework besides, depending on what your initial endorsement is in and how you came through the system.

So, for example, if you came through the alternative route, and you're teaching English in high school, that doesn't mean you can go back, and take the practice, and get your elementary endorsement without doing additional coursework. That would be a situation in which you'd need to do additional coursework.

I'll go back and get, for the Committee, the P-3 information and all the regulations.

**ASSEMBLYMAN VAS:** Jessica, I think the other issue here is, if the answer is no, I think there should--

**MS. deKONINCK:** Why?

**ASSEMBLYMAN VAS:** No, and it's not even so much why. It's that we should be providing some guidance to the callers and the inquirists as to what they really can do.

MS. deKONINCK: Absolutely.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Because they shouldn't be treated-- There shouldn't be a double standard set for the P-3 certification versus the K-5 or the other certifications that are out there. In fact, we should be encouraging them to add to their certifications with endorsements and advising them how it is that they can do that. Because it enhances the quality of education.

MS. deKONINCK: You're raising a very important point, Assemblyman. My office gets a lot of calls about certification. The process is still somewhat confusing to applicants, at best.

Just for your information, the Commissioner has been asked to do a presentation at the Senate Education Committee on the 9th of June, about all of the issues in the current certification program.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: When is that, June 9?

MS. deKONINCK: June 9.

So in addition to providing information to this Committee--

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: You can alert him to the fact that we're going to be calling him to this Committee to provide us that information. And we're going to invite people from the educational community to be here to hear about it, as well.

MS. deKONINCK: I'd be pleased to do that.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN VAS: Okay.

Thank you, all, very much.

Is there someone else in the audience that wants to be heard that is not listed on the agenda? (no response)

If not, I want to thank you all for your participation in this hearing.

There are some refreshments and some snacks here.

I want to thank Melanie Schulz, the Executive Director to the Joint Commission; and also Sharon Benesta, who is here with us today, for their assistance in arranging for this meeting, providing us with the information that we have, and communicating with all of you.

Thank you all, very, very much.

**(MEETING CONCLUDED)**