

Creating a Qualified Preschool Teaching Workforce Part I

Getting Qualified: A Report on the Efforts of Preschool Teachers in New Jersey's *Abbott*

Districts to Improve their Qualifications

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Research evidence demonstrates that a high-quality early education can ameliorate the effects of disadvantage and produce positive outcomes not only for children and their families, but society as well (Barnett, 1998; Vandell & Wolfe, 2000). One of the most consistent indicators of quality is the presence of qualified teachers who have attained a bachelor's degree and some additional specialized content in child development or early childhood education (Barnett, 2003; Whitebook, 2003). Teachers with this kind of training tend to work with their students in developmentally appropriate ways that help children to build on their emerging understandings and skills (Helburn, 1995; Howes, Whitebook, & Phillips, 1992; Kontos & Wilcox-Herzog, 1997). Moreover, qualified teachers provide directions that follow on from what children are already engaged in, or introduce uninvolved children to new activities, so that children spend less time in repetitive or low-level activities (de Kruif, McWilliam, & Ridley, 2000). Consequently, children who are educated by qualified teachers have been found to be more sociable, exhibit a more developed use of language, and perform at a higher level on cognitive tasks (Bowman, Donovan, & Burns, 2001; Dwyer, Chait, & McKee, 2000; Howes, 1997).

Despite the evidence linking teacher qualifications with quality, however, policymakers who are initiating efforts to increase children's access to high-quality preschool programs face several issues. The first of these is the wide variation in educational backgrounds of teachers in the workforce. While all 50 states currently require Kindergarten teachers to have a minimum of a BA, only 18 states require that teachers in private ECE settings undergo *any* pre-service training, much less hold a degree in early childhood education (Ackerman, in press). Not surprisingly, national studies examining the educational backgrounds of ECE teachers have

estimated that only one-third (Burton et al., 2002) to almost one-half (Saluja et al., 2002) of teachers in private ECE settings have a minimum of a BA.

A second and related issue is that although teachers may wish to improve their credentials, they are also most likely to be non-traditional students who face additional challenges when undertaking further education. Horn and Carroll (1996) argue that there is an “obvious negative association between degree attainment and the presence of any nontraditional characteristics,” (p. 25) such as delayed enrollment in college, part-time attendance, concurrent full-time employment, and non-spousal dependents. In addition, the family and work responsibilities of older women students--like those who comprise the early childhood teaching workforce--often makes it difficult to find enough time to complete individual course requirements. Compounding this issue further is the inadequate salary and benefits that accompany teaching young children that offer little incentive to assume the personal and financial costs of additional professional development, as well (Barnett, 2003; Edwards, 1999; National Center for Early Development & Learning, 1997; Whitebook, et al., 2001).

A third and final issue concerns the current system of teacher preparation and professional development and its ability to meet the growing demand for qualified professionals (Horn-Wingerd, Hyson, & Karp, 2000). Various policy documents (*Eager to Learn*, Bowman et al., 2001; *New Teachers for a New Century*, National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education, 2000) call for a retooling of the faculties teaching early childhood courses to ensure that teachers of young children receive up to date knowledge in the teaching of domain specific knowledge, child development, and meeting the needs of diverse student populations. What little research is available (e.g. Early & Winton, 2001) would suggest that most faculties of teacher education do not have the capacity to meet this expectation.

Creating a qualified preschool teaching workforce that can produce the child outcomes associated with high-quality programs therefore requires states to not only encourage existing staff that teach three- and four-year olds to increase their qualifications, but to also create a system of professional preparation that can both support non-traditional learners and develop their professional expertise. This two-part report documents the findings of a study of New Jersey's efforts to develop a cadre of qualified preschool teachers and these teachers' experiences in newly created Preschool- Grade 3 (P-3) teacher preparation programs. The focus of this report (part I) is on teachers' efforts to get qualified by an externally imposed time frame. The second part examines teachers' experiences and perceptions of their professional preparation.

Becoming a Qualified Preschool Teacher in New Jersey and *Abbott vs. Burke*

New Jersey provides a unique context from which to study the problem of creating a qualified preschool teaching workforce because of the recent *Abbott vs. Burke* (1998, 2000) Supreme Court decisions. These decisions ordered the 30 school districts serving the state's poorest students to embark on an ambitious reform agenda aimed at creating systems of high-quality preschool for 3- and 4-year-old children beginning in the 1999/2000 school year. High-quality programs were defined as those having a class size of no more than 15 students with a certified teacher and teacher assistant in each class. Furthermore, high quality also encompassed a developmentally appropriate curriculum linked to the state's core curriculum content standards, and the provision of adequate facilities, special education, bilingual education, transportation, health, and other services as needed. To ensure that this definition of quality was enacted, the Court also mandated that all teachers in *Abbott* preschools must obtain a Bachelor's degree leading to teacher certification by September 2004.

Prior to this decision, the credential one needed to be a “teacher” in New Jersey’s preschools was dependent on whether the setting one taught in was privately or publicly funded. In order to teach in most of the private centers in the state, teachers need to have a minimum of a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential (Division of Youth and Family Services, 1998). Obtaining the CDA credential involves undertaking 120 clock hours of training in such subjects as promoting a safe and healthy learning environment and supporting children’s social and emotional development (Council for Professional Recognition, 2000). Non-credit trainings are provided by most of the state’s Child Care Resource & Referral agencies, and for-credit CDA coursework is available at most of New Jersey’s two-year community colleges, which also grant Associate’s degrees.

In contrast to the qualifications necessary for teaching in a private, private center, those who teach in New Jersey’s public school preschool classrooms must have a minimum of both a Bachelor’s degree and a certification that specifically relates to early childhood. Traditional teacher preparation programs resulting in a Bachelor’s (BA) or Master’s degree and certification are available at over 20 public and private colleges and universities throughout the state. Most of the BA-level programs involve 30 credits each in both an academic major and educational methodology courses, as well as approximately 60 credits of general education. Teachers also participate in observational field experiences and semester-long student teaching internships.

Since 1985 New Jersey has also had alternate route certification. In the alternate route program, those who hold a BA or graduate degree in the liberal arts or sciences—but have *not* participated in a traditional teacher education program—may be issued a provisional license and thus teach in the state’s public schools (New Jersey Department of Education, 2003). Participants attend 200 hours of after-school training during their first 30 weeks of teaching (Klagholz, 2001;

New Jersey Department of Education, 2003b), and receive 20 days of initial mentoring and ongoing supervision from someone in their school or district for the first 34 weeks of employment.

Prior to the advent of the Court's 1998 *Abbott* decision, therefore, preschool teachers seeking certification in New Jersey had only one option: attainment of the Nursery through Grade 8 (N-8) credential through either the alternate or traditional route. The Court's decision in 2000, however, added an additional regulation concerning teacher qualifications. Unless teachers already held this certificate or a K-8 certificate and had two years of experience working with preschool aged children, the new mandate required that all teachers in the *Abbott* preschools—whether in a private setting or public school—have a minimum of a BA with early childhood certification by September 2004.

Policy Responses to Abbott vs. Burke

As a result of *Abbott vs. Burke* (2000), there have been two different, yet related policy responses to meet the mandate. First, institutions of higher education have had to create specialized P-3 programs, utilizing both alternate and traditional route preparation programs. Currently 14 four-year colleges and universities offer various programs for teachers who need to obtain the P-3 endorsement or certification, ranging from BA with initial certification to a graduate specialized alternate route track. In addition, a scholarship program has also been initiated to pay for teachers' tuition as they upgrade their qualifications.

Because there were insufficient numbers of certified teachers in New Jersey who were willing to work in preschool settings when the *Abbott* program began, however, Acting-Governor DiFrancesco also initiated *The Governor's Abbott Preschool Teacher Recruitment Program* in 2001. This program provided salary incentives between \$3,500 - \$6,000 and a laptop

computer to anyone with a BA who could qualify for a Certificate of Eligibility under the Alternate Route to Certification guidelines, and would teach in an *Abbott* preschool (New Jersey Department of Education, 2001). Although no data has been released regarding the numbers of teachers who responded to this initiative, this program is one of the many paths that have been created to recruit teachers into the *Abbott* preschool workforce.

The teachers who participated in this study represent every credential and degree on a continuum of teacher qualifications, ranging from holding the CDA credential, to already having obtained a BA and certification, and to gaining their P-3 through an alternate route program. In this report on creating a qualified preschool teaching workforce in the *Abbott* districts, we detail the findings with regard to these teachers' efforts to get qualified by the Court's September 2004 deadline.

Methodology

The purposes of the study were threefold. First, we sought to gather data to inform state policymakers and district administrators about the current educational status of preschool teachers working in public school, Head Start, and private child care settings in the *Abbott* districts and their efforts to improve their qualifications, as well as the barriers and supports that influenced these efforts. A second purpose was to examine teachers' professional development experiences, the content addressed in these experiences, and what they found informative about these trainings and/or coursework to their practice. By comparing the teachers' responses to the current research base on effective teacher development, a third purpose of this study was to identify gaps in the current system of professional development and potential pathways for improvement.

Sample

The sample for this study consists of 689 certified and non-certified teachers who worked in public school, Head Start, and private classrooms in the state's 30 *Abbott* districts during the 2002/03 school year. The sample itself was obtained in three overlapping phases. In the first phase, we utilized a stratified sampling method which involved randomly choosing approximately 800 of the 2,003 *Abbott* preschool teachers as compiled by the New Jersey Department of Education in the Fall of 2001. We then attempted to contact these teachers via phone, fax, and letter in order to obtain information regarding the best place and time to participate in our telephone interview. Out of this initial sample of 800 teachers, however, over 180 were found to no longer be working at either their public school or private center, and thus the second phase involved replacing these teachers with whoever was working in their place.

As we continued in both of these initial phases to contact teachers and ask for their participation in the study, over 200 teachers either declined or provided us with contact information, but subsequently were unwilling to respond to the telephone survey. We then attempted to replace these teachers with other teachers from the same districts and from the appropriate auspice within those districts, and who had never been chosen in either of the first two phases. Although our response rate varied among districts and within each auspice, this strategy resulted in a final *Abbott* cohort of 689 teachers (270 public school, 94 Head Start, and 325 private preschool teachers).

Data Collection

All participating teachers were surveyed over the telephone during 2002 and 2003 using a structured protocol developed by the authors. The interview protocol examined four key areas related to implementation of high-quality preschool at the classroom level. The first area of the

protocol queried participants regarding their background information and work experience and history. The second area of the protocol examined the teacher credentials of our sample, and sought to gain input not only on the numbers of teachers working towards any increased qualification—including a P-3 certification—but anticipated completion dates, as well. Because many preschool teachers are also non-traditional students, the protocol elicited information on the reasons teachers are seeking to improve their qualifications and the supports and barriers that may be affecting their current educational endeavors.

Through utilization of a Likert scale of responses regarding teachers' beliefs and practices of teaching young children (Charlesworth, Hart, Burts, Thomasson, Mosley, & Fleege, 1993), the third focus of the interview protocol was on teaching practices within the classroom. We also queried participants regarding the use of any specific curriculum models, and their perceptions of their role in preparing three- and four-year olds for K-12 education. Of particular concern here and throughout the protocol were teachers' understandings and responsiveness to children from low-income backgrounds, many of whom do not speak English as their primary language. As little is known about the form and content of professional development experiences that impact on program quality or the amount of assistance teachers need if they are to implement policy initiatives like those outlined in the *Abbott* decision, a final section sought to document each teacher's experiences with professional development.

All data were collected via a telephone interview conducted by a professional data collection firm, using a computer-aided telephone interview (CATI) system. Participating teachers either received a letter confirming the time and place they wished to be called prior to participating in the study, or were contacted directly by the data collection firm in order to schedule a time to be interviewed. Upon completing the survey participating teachers were

mailed a \$20 gift certificate to a national bookstore chain. Data collection began in December 2002 and concluded September 2003.

Data Analysis

To ensure that accurate predictions could be made, the sample was weighted to represent the total 2003-2004 teaching population of 2825 teachers in the *Abbott* districts based on data provided by the New Jersey Department of Education. Descriptive statistics were conducted using the weighted data to provide a sense of the responses to each question and to highlight potential areas for further analysis. In order to ascertain whether there were differences between teachers in the differing auspices, these statistics were also broken down according to whether teachers worked in a public school, Head Start, or a private setting. This distinction is important, as 68% of the *Abbott* preschool teachers work in either private or Head Start programs, and are thus less likely not to have attained a teaching credential prior to the Court's mandate.

The findings presented below address the analyses of the data set in terms of demographic characteristics of the *Abbott* preschool teaching population, the qualifications of preschool teachers, and their efforts to obtain further training. It is important to note here that these findings are based on self-reported data and therefore may not always be accurate. While we have attempted to ensure wherever possible that the data are precise, we did receive a number of inconsistent responses that suggest potential inaccuracies in reporting. The confidence intervals and standards errors for the data are reported in Appendices A and B.

Findings

Demographic Characteristics of Preschool Teachers in New Jersey's Abbott Districts

The first part of our survey sought to establish the demographic characteristics of the preschool workforce in the *Abbott* preschools. We were interested in collecting this data in order to compare the backgrounds of teachers comprising New Jersey's workforce to other national studies, and to ascertain how these demographics compare to the overall *Abbott* student population.

Table 1 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the *Abbott* teaching population. (The standard errors and confidence intervals for these weighted estimates are reported in Appendix A.) Similar to estimates of the national teaching population (e.g. Howes, Whitebook, & Phillips, 1992; Saluja et al., 2002), the average age of *Abbott* preschool teachers is 38 years old and 96% of the teachers in these school districts are female. In addition, 21.1% of the *Abbott* teaching population is from countries other than the United States, and most of these teachers work in either private settings or Head Start programs.

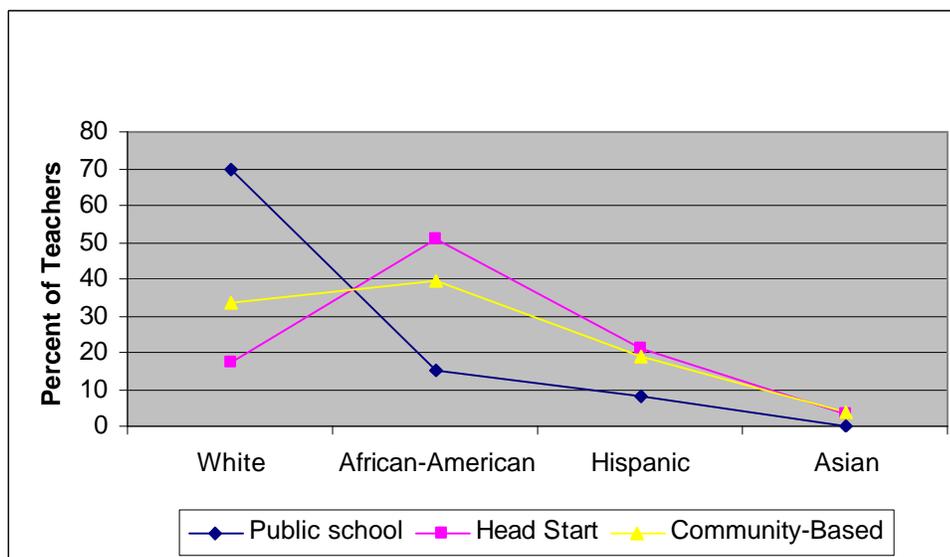
Table 1. *Abbott Preschool Teacher Demographics*

Auspice	Mean Age	Gender	Ethnicity	% Immigrants
Overall (N=2825)	38.1	96.0% Female	White: 43.6% African-American: 32.5% Hispanic: 15.8% Asian: 3.1% Native American: .2% Refused: 4.7%	21.1%
Public School (N=919)	39.6	96.6% Female	White: 69.6% African-American: 15.2% Hispanic: 8.3% Asian/Pacific Islander: 2.3% Native American: .1% Refused: 4.5%	13.4%
Head Start (N=274)	40.9	97.3% Female	White: 17.5% African-American: 50.7% Hispanic: 21.0% Asian/Pacific Islander: 3.1% Native American: 0% Refused: 7.7%	25.6%
Private (N= 1632)	36.8	95.3% Female	White: 33.4% African-American: 39.2% Hispanic: 19.1% Asian/Pacific Islander: 3.6% Native American: .3% Refused: 4.4%	24.7%

Almost half of all preschool teachers working in the *Abbott* districts are White (43.6%). Teachers self-identifying as African American comprise 32.5% of the teaching workforce, while only 15.8% of the teachers in the *Abbott* districts are Hispanic. A small proportion of teachers in the *Abbott* districts are from Asian-American or Native American backgrounds. Ethnicity of the teaching population varies across program type (see Table 2) however, with the majority of public school teachers (69.6%) being White, and less than 25% being either African-American or Hispanic. The ethnic backgrounds of teachers in the public school preschool programs are not that different than

those of New Jersey's K-12 *Abbott* district teaching population overall, which is 61.6% White, 24.8% African-American, and 11.6% Hispanic. Conversely, in the private settings and Head Start programs there are higher proportions of African American and Hispanic teachers than found in public school preschool settings.

Table 2. *Ethnicity of Teaching Population*



Salaries and Teaching Experience

Preschool teachers in the *Abbott* districts receive an average salary of \$37,050.00 for teaching an academic or school year, but teachers in private and Head Start settings earn approximately \$7,500.00 less than their counterparts in the public schools. While teachers in public schools receive an average salary of \$41,834.00, Head Start teachers earn \$34,200.00 and private teachers receive slightly more with a salary of \$34,440.00. One reason for these differences in salary may be that there are more teachers in public schools who already have a Bachelor's degree and certification (93%), as compared to teachers in Head Start (52.3%) and private programs (55.8%).

Salaries may also vary across program type because of differences in the professional experience of teachers in these settings. In general, teachers in the *Abbott* districts have been working in the classroom for an average of nine and half years, and 60% of the teaching population has more than five years of experience. However, almost half of the teachers in s (47%) have less than four years of classroom experience as compared to 30% of Head Start teachers and 31% of public school preschool teachers.

Despite the large number of years in the profession of many teachers, 77% of all teachers in this study have been teaching at their current place of employment for five years or less. Over the course of their entire range of experience, teachers in the *Abbott* districts have worked in at least two educational settings.

Qualifications of Teachers and Efforts Towards Obtaining Additional Credentials

Degrees Attained. The majority of the teachers in the *Abbott* districts have already attained a BA (70%) and there is little variation in numbers of teachers across program type. An additional 15% of teachers have attained a Master's degree or higher and most of these teachers (49%) work in the public schools. Of those teachers with a BA or higher, 68% of these teachers also have some type of teacher certification.

Enrollment status. Forty-eight percent of the teachers in the *Abbott* districts are undertaking further education. The majority of these teachers (83%) are taking coursework that will lead to a P-3 teaching credential. Figure 1 outlines the various routes or pathways these teachers are taking to attain their P-3 teaching credential. Of the 6.5% of teachers who are not enrolled in coursework leading to a P-3 credential, most are already certified teachers attempting to complete a Masters degree.

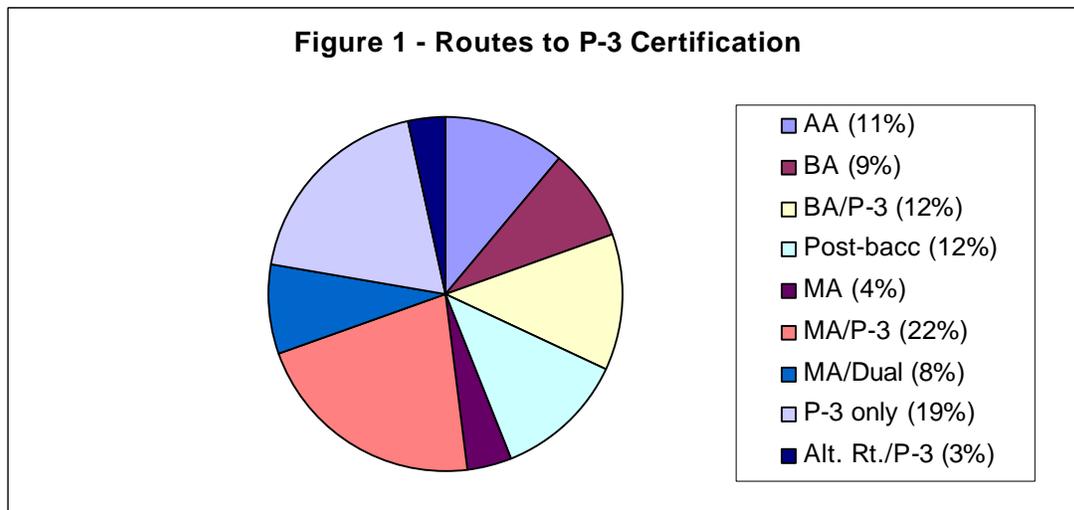
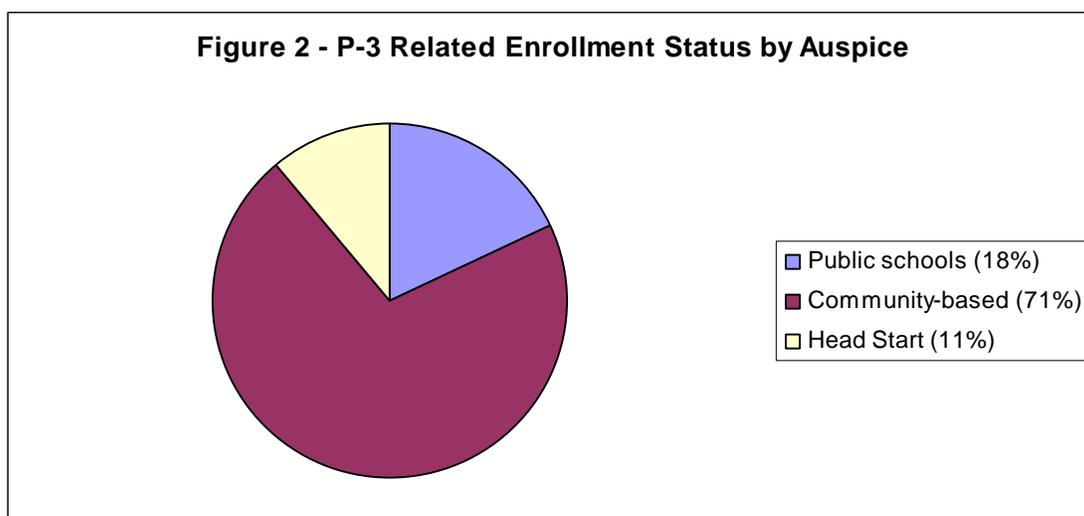


Figure 2 shows enrollment status when examined from the perspective of the setting in which teachers work. As can be seen, there are a disproportional amount of teachers working in private (71%) and Head Start programs (11%) in comparison to those teachers in the public schools (18%). It is not surprising that 82% of teachers working toward a P-3 credential are from private or Head Start programs, as until the *Abbott* mandate, they were not required to have a four-year degree or a teaching credential.



Meeting the Abbott mandate's 2004 deadline. Table 3 examines the *Abbott* teaching workforce and the proportions of teachers who potentially will and will not meet the court imposed deadline for a Bachelor's degree and teaching credential by September 2004.

Table 3. *Meeting the 2004 Abbott Mandate*¹

		Potential % of teachers meeting the mandate	Potential % of teachers not meeting the mandate
Had both BA & certification in 2002/03	Not enrolled	42.7	0
	Enrolled in Masters degree (MA)	6.5	0
Working towards a P-3 related credential in 2002/03 ²	Associates degree (AA)	.1	4.1
	Bachelor's degree (BA), no endorsement	2.3	1.0
	BA with P-3	3.1	1.8
	Post-baccalaureate with P-3	4.8	0
	MA, no endorsement	1.7	0
	MA with P-3	8.5	0
	MA with P-3 & additional endorsement	3.3	0
	P-3 endorsement only	7.8	0
	Alternate Route with P-3 endorsement	1.3	0
Not certified and not enrolled in P-3 related program in 2002/03 ³	Not enrolled in any P-3 related program	6.9	2.2
	Working towards a CDA	.2	0.5
	Working towards an Alternate Rt., non P-3 certification	.9	0.0
TOTAL ⁴		90.1	9.6

¹ Data from 2002-03. Actual numbers in 2004-05 may differ because of teacher turnover and/or degree completion by additional teachers. In addition, see Appendix B for weighted estimates with both standard errors and confidence intervals.

² Because teachers working towards a postbacc, MA, P-3 endorsement, or alternate route certificate already had a BA, we reported that they could potentially meet the mandate.

³ Teachers in these categories already had a BA and potentially could meet the mandate. However, at the time of this study, they did not report being enrolled in P-3 coursework.

⁴ 0.3 % of the teaching population cannot be determined due to inconsistent reporting.

As can be seen, 49.2% of the teaching population is certified and therefore already meets the mandate. In addition 32.9% of teachers who are enrolled in coursework anticipate finishing their degree requirements by the court-imposed deadline. When combined with the proportion of the teaching population in the *Abbott* districts who are already certified, we thus estimate that 82.2% of *Abbott* teachers will meet the mandate.

Another 8% of teachers may potentially meet the mandate. Teachers within this group already have attained a Bachelor's degree, and while not enrolled in a credentialing program at the time of this study, could have enrolled since then and therefore also not be out of time to meet the mandate. However, it is important to note that in 2002/03, 1.1% of these were enrolled in CDA or alternate route programs, which would not lead to any kind of early childhood certification.

As can also be seen in Table 3, 6.9% of *Abbott* preschool teachers who are also undertaking P-3 related coursework will not meet the deadline of September 2004. The majority of these teachers, however, have indicated that they will be able to complete their course requirements within 2 years or by September 2006. In addition, 2.7% of the teaching population is not attempting to meet the mandate at all. The teachers within this group do not have a Bachelor's degree and are not enrolled in any kind of coursework that may lead to an early childhood teaching credential in the near future. In sum, then, 90.1% of the *Abbott* teaching population will potentially meet the September 2004 deadline, but an additional 9.6% of teachers will not. This latter proportion represents approximately 273 teachers. Of these approximately 273 teachers (see Table 4) who we project will not meet the mandate, all of them are working either in private settings (74.1%) or Head Start programs (25.9%).

Table 4. *Breakdown by Auspice of Teachers who are not Going to Meet the Mandate*

	% Public School	% Private	% Head Start
Do not have certification and are not enrolled in any program leading to a P-3		22.3	6.2
Working towards: AA		30.7	11.7
BA, no endorsement noted		6.2	4.0
BA with P-3		15.0	4.0
TOTAL	0	74.1	25.9

Retention issues. While the proportion of teachers who will not be able to meet the mandate may seem small in comparison to the total *Abbott* teaching workforce, it should also be noted that 33% of the teachers who are enrolled in some kind of teacher preparation program indicated that they intended to leave their positions once they became certified. When we examined this question by district, only seven districts out of the thirty do not appear to be at risk for teacher turnover. Alternatively, six districts could possibly lose at least 20% of their teachers once they obtain their teaching credential. These districts are Irvington, New Brunswick, Passaic, Paterson, Plainfield, and Trenton.

The choice to not remain in their current positions does not appear to be related to the degree teachers are working on or whether or not they will meet the mandate of September, 2004. Eighty percent of these teachers are working in private or Head Start preschool settings and when asked the job they were considering taking up, the majority indicated that they want to be a teacher in a public school setting. The most often cited reasons for wanting to move to the public schools were the additional pay and/or benefits, the better working conditions, as well as the higher status or value associated with this job. It is interesting to note that when teachers were asked how much extra salary would be compensation for finishing their degree, the average

amount was \$6,900.00. This amount would bring the current average salary of Head Start and private preschool teachers in line with that of their counterparts in public schools.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The *Abbott vs. Burke* Supreme Court decision has contributed to increasing numbers of qualified preschool teachers in the *Abbott* districts. Our findings indicate that by September 2004, 90.1% of the *Abbott* teaching population could potentially have a Bachelor's degree and be at least provisionally certificated. Given that when the 2000 Supreme Court decision was handed down only 15% of teachers in the private settings had a BA in early childhood (Barnett, Tarr, Lamy, & Frede, 2001), and there was no system of professional preparation in place to meet the increased demand for qualified teachers created by this mandate, this outcome is quite remarkable.

Despite the increasing numbers of qualified teachers in the *Abbott* districts, however, there is also an unintended consequence of this mandate. While teachers--particularly those in private settings--are increasing their qualifications, once they become qualified they are also eligible for other job opportunities. Our findings suggest that one third of the teachers who were enrolled in 2002-03 intend to leave their jobs in private and Head Start programs for public school teaching positions. It is quite feasible that these teachers who have reported that they intend to leave their current position once they become certified may take up a preschool teaching position in a public school setting within an *Abbott* district. It is also possible that some of these teachers may take teaching positions outside of the State's poorest or *Abbott* districts. While we cannot predict accurately where these teachers will go, if they do not take a position in an *Abbott* preschool classroom then 23 of the 30 *Abbott* districts may not be able to meet the mandate. What we do know is that the absence of continuity of care has been shown to

negatively impact children's learning and development (Whitebook, Phillips, & Howes, 1993), and therefore this projected turnover is expected to lessen program quality.

In addition to losing teachers because of turnover, there is also the issue that 9.6% of the *Abbott* teaching population will potentially not meet the court imposed deadline to be certified by September 2004. We thus estimate that of the approximately 2825 teachers currently working in *Abbott* preschools, 273 teachers will not be able to retain their positions given the court requirement. Although our findings indicate that half of the teachers who will not meet the deadline will be able to finish if given an extension of time until September 2006, there is also a group of teachers who will not meet the mandate at all because they are not enrolled, not certified, and did not have a Bachelor's degree at the time of this study.

Moreover, our predictions about who will potentially meet the mandate includes a group of teachers (8%) who at the time of the study already had a Bachelor's degree but were either not enrolled in a certification program or were enrolled in one that did not lead to an early childhood credential. These teachers will meet the deadline as long as they have enrolled in P-3 related coursework within the past year. If they have not enrolled however, then there will be more than the predicted 273 teachers who will not be able to meet the deadline of September 2004.

Finally, meeting the mandate does not pose the same problem for every district. Based on responses to our survey, it appears that all teachers in 11 districts (Bridgeton, Burlington City, Gloucester City, Keansburg, Long Branch, Neptune, Passaic, Pemberton, Phillipsburg, Pleasantville, and West New York) will meet the mandate. Conversely, four districts (Harrison, Newark, Orange, and Plainfield) stand to lose at least 20% of their teachers if the deadline is enforced.

In summary, the findings of this study would suggest that it is possible to create a certificated preschool teaching workforce within a short period of time. However, this study also indicates that the very policy that aims to put a qualified teacher in an *Abbott* preschool classroom may also serve to decrease the numbers of teachers available. As it may not be possible to replace the teachers who will have to leave their jobs given the September 2004 deadline, the following recommendations are made with the aim of ensuring that every child in an *Abbott* classroom is taught by a qualified teacher within the very near future.

First, to ensure that there is an ongoing supply of suitably credentialed preschool teachers, the deadline to become certified should be extended until September 2006. This extension will ensure that those teachers who are currently enrolled in P-3 related coursework but indicated that they cannot meet the current deadline will have adequate time to complete their degree requirements. However, an extension of time should not necessarily be granted to every teacher who is enrolled in P-3 related coursework, but instead only to those who can demonstrate that they will be able to meet this new deadline. Therefore it will be imperative for the early childhood administration within each *Abbott* district to develop a monitoring system that enables them to determine who these teachers are and how they are progressing towards meeting the new deadline.

Second, one of the benefits of collaboration among the public schools, Head Start, and private settings is that there is a more diverse teaching workforce than what children in the *Abbott* districts would experience if they attended preschool in the public schools exclusively. However, many of the teachers who are from diverse ethnic backgrounds work in private and Head Start programs and these are the teachers who also report that they intend to leave their

current positions once they become qualified. In order to retain these teachers in their current positions, specific incentives need to be developed.

While we realize that the State is attempting to ensure parity in salary for all teachers within the *Abbott* districts, the fact remains that there still exists a two-tiered system of working conditions within the current preschool system. Although we did not ask teachers what they meant by "better working conditions," given that those who care for and educate young children often must work longer hours than public school teachers and feel "they seldom receive recognition for their important work" (Whitebook & Sakai, 2004, p. x), we might assume that these conditions revolve around issues of benefits and status. Therefore in order for teachers not to feel shortchanged, efforts must be made to alleviate any differences in the working conditions and benefits between public schools and private settings. Providing teachers in private settings with a financial bonus if they agree to remain in their current position for at least three years once they become qualified may serve as an initial incentive while this process gets underway.

Third, attention also needs to be paid to the issue of why there are currently teachers in *Abbott* classrooms who do not appear to be responding to the mandate at all. In our survey the top two reasons cited by this group of non-enrolled teachers for why they are not attempting to gain a P-3 credential is because they already have all the education they need for the job and they do not get enough time off from their work duties to undertake further study. Getting certified to meet the mandate is not simply an individual responsibility, however, but also one that resides with the State, the administration within each *Abbott* district, and the leadership of the various programs and schools who are receiving public funds to provide a high-quality preschool education to three- and four-year-olds.

Given that there is a group of teachers working in private settings who also have a Bachelor's degree and could be gaining their P-3 certification through the alternate route within the time frame, the leadership within each district needs to identify these teachers and determine their intent to meet the *Abbott* deadline, and therefore what actions the district may need to take. For example, as these teachers have identified time constraints as impeding their ability to upgrade their qualifications, district administrators may want to consider what kinds of support they might be able to offer these teachers to enable them to complete the alternate route program efficiently.

Finally, the variation between districts in terms of teachers' efforts and abilities to meet the mandate would suggest that some districts have been more successful in recruiting certified teachers and/or supporting preschool teachers to obtain their certification. While we can only speculate about why these differences exist, one reason may be because some districts were more intent on enforcing the requirements of the *Abbott* decision and the deadline for teacher certification than others. In addition, it is highly probable that the size of district as well as the model of preschool employed (in-district preschool, or collaborations between district and private settings) most likely plays a difference in the numbers of teachers able to meet the mandate. Our findings suggest that there are potential lessons to be learned from the more successful districts. It would seem worthwhile to identify the common strategies employed by these districts to ensure that teachers have been able to meet the mandate on time.

In conclusion, a court mandate may be one way to create a qualified preschool teaching workforce, who have not only attained a Bachelor's degree and teaching credential, but in a short period of time, as well. Qualifications, however, are only the beginning step in creating a highly qualified workforce. It thus remains to be seen if the mandate will also lead to New Jersey

having a cadre of knowledgeable professionals whose expertise can facilitate ongoing improvement in the State's *Abbott* preschools.

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Appendix A

Table 1. *Mean Age of Abbott Preschool Teachers*

	Mean Age	Standard Error	LOWER 95%	UPPER 95%	CELL_n	DENOM_n
Overall	38.11	0.781	36.52	39.71	378	N/A
Public School	39.60	1.146	37.25	41.94	266	N/A
Head Start	40.91	1.955	36.91	44.91	94	N/A
Private	36.80	0.718	35.33	38.27	318	N/A

Appendix A

Table 2. *Gender, Ethnicity, and Immigrant Status*

		Percent	Standard Error	LOWER 95%	UPPER 95%	CELL_n	DENOM_n
Overall	Female	95.92	1.011	93.85	97.98	665	689
	White	43.64	7.712	27.86	59.41	339	689
	African-American	32.5	6.703	18.79	46.2	204	689
	Hispanic	15.75	3.49	8.61	22.89	94	689
	Asian/ Pacific						
	Islander	3.14	1.118	0.86	5.43	19	689
	Native American	0.24	0.216	-0.21	0.68	2	689
	Refused	4.74	0.825	3.05	6.43	31	689
	Immigrant Status	21.12	3.15	14.68	27.56	133	689
	Public Schools	Female	96.66	1.307	93.99	99.34	262	270
White		69.56	4.469	60.42	78.7	198	270
African-American		15.22	4.499	6.02	24.42	35	270
Hispanic		8.29	2.119	3.96	12.62	19	270
Asian/ Pacific							
Islander		2.29	0.872	0.51	4.08	6	270
Native American		0.11	0.132	-0.16	0.38	1	270
Refused		4.53	1.475	1.51	7.54	11	270
Immigrant Status		13.44	4.164	4.92	21.95	32	270
Head Start		Female	97.34	3.353	90.49	104.2	92	94
	White	17.48	9.099	-1.13	36.09	15	94
	African-American	50.66	16.477	16.96	84.36	51	94
	Hispanic	21	10.127	0.29	41.71	19	94
	Asian/ Pacific						
	Islander	3.13	2.004	-0.97	7.23	3	94
	Native American					0	94
	Refused	7.72	6.963	-6.52	21.97	6	94
	Immigrant Status	25.6	6.752	11.79	39.41	22	94
	Private	Female	95.26	1.348	92.5	98.01	311	325
White		33.43	8.793	15.45	51.41	126	325
African-American		39.18	6.308	26.27	52.08	118	325
Hispanic		19.07	4.809	9.23	28.9	56	325
Asian/ Pacific							
Islander		3.62	1.553	0.44	6.8	10	325
Native American		0.34	0.372	-0.42	1.11	1	325
Refused		4.36	1.074	2.16	6.56	14	325
Immigrant Status		24.7	4.009	16.5	32.9	79	325

Appendix B

Table 1. *Potential Percentages of Teachers Meeting the Mandate*

Enrollment Status	Percent	Standard Error	LOWER 95%	UPPER 95%	Estimate	Standard Error	LOWER 95%	UPPER 95%	CELL_n
Not enrolled, but already certified	42.75	2.84	36.71	48.80	1207.71	201.49	778.24	1637.18	321.00
Enrolled in MA & already certified	6.52	0.88	4.64	8.41	184.20	34.02	111.70	256.71	48.00
AA	0.10	0.12	-0.14	0.35	2.93	2.93	-3.32	9.18	1.00
BA, no endorsement noted	2.29	0.80	0.58	4.00	64.59	28.74	3.34	125.83	16.00
BA with P-3	3.10	1.01	0.95	5.25	87.62	36.92	8.93	166.31	20.00
Post-bacc. with P-3	4.77	0.87	2.93	6.62	134.86	29.56	71.85	197.86	26.00
MA, no endorsement noted	1.67	0.50	0.60	2.74	47.17	16.36	12.31	82.04	13.00
MA with P-3	8.55	0.97	6.48	10.62	241.62	53.49	127.62	355.62	59.00
MA with P-3 & additional endorsement	3.32	0.89	1.41	5.23	93.81	32.05	25.49	162.13	22.00
P-3 endorsement only	7.76	1.33	4.92	10.60	219.22	41.04	131.76	306.69	48.00
Alternate Route with P-3 endorsement	1.31	0.44	0.36	2.25	36.90	14.35	6.32	67.48	7.00
Not Enrolled in any P-3 related program	6.87	1.46	3.75	9.98	194.00	50.66	86.01	301.98	39.00
Working Towards a CDA	0.18	0.19	-0.21	0.58	5.22	5.22	-5.91	16.36	1.00
Working Towards an Alternate Route, non-P-3 certificate	0.90	0.60	-0.38	2.19	25.48	15.94	-8.49	59.46	5.00
Total	90.10	3.06	83.59	96.61	2545.34	433.71	1620.92	3469.77	626.00

Appendix B

Table 2. *Potential Percentages of Teachers Not Meeting the Mandate*

Enrollment Status	Percent	Standard Error	LOWER 95%	UPPER 95%	Estimate	Standard Error	LOWER 95%	UPPER 95%	CELL_n
Not enrolled, but already certified	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	0.00
Enrolled in MA & already certified	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	0.00
AA	4.12	2.19	-0.54	8.78	116.45	72.17	-37.39	270.28	25.00
BA, no endorsement noted	0.96	0.44	0.02	1.90	27.10	14.44	-3.67	57.87	7.00
BA with P-3	1.81	0.46	0.84	2.78	51.13	18.24	12.26	90.01	12.00
Post-bacc. with P-3	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	0.00
MA, no endorsement noted	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	0.00
MA with P-3	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	0.00
MA with P-3 & additional endorsement	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	0.00
P-3 endorsement only	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	0.00
Alternate Route with P-3 endorsement	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	0.00
Not Enrolled in any P-3 related program	2.20	0.60	0.92	3.48	62.21	23.59	11.94	112.48	15.00
Working Towards a CDA	0.53	0.36	-0.23	1.29	15.04	10.64	-7.63	37.71	2.00
Working Towards an Alternate Route, non-P-3 certificate	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	0.00
Total	9.63	3.11	2.99	16.26	271.93	119.32	17.60	526.26	61.00