

**ABBOTT
WORRIES**

Hudson County
loses state aid

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The JERSEY JOURNAL

School funding formula threatens Abbott aid

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Jersey City and other poor school districts stand to lose massive amounts of state aid once the state adopts a new funding formula, Assemblywoman Joan Quigley said last week.

Quigley, D-Jersey City, made these and other observations at a forum about charter school funding Nov. 20 at a church in Downtown Jersey City.

Quigley, who begins her eighth term as a state legislator in January, said the state's other districts are tired of seeing the lion's share of state school aid going to the 31 Abbott districts, which in Hudson County includes Jersey City, Union City, West New York, Harrison and Hoboken.

"They have ganged up on us," Quigley said of the non-Abbotts.

Quigley predicted that when Gov. Jon Corzine finally does announce his long promised new school funding formula — which he's promised to do before the end of the year — the money spent to equalize spending between the rich and poor districts will be spent on an individual student basis, rather than a district-wide basis.

"Parents might have to show

income tax statements," Quigley said. "Jersey City might lose some money because not all our kids are poor. Bayonne might gain because some of their kids are poor."

Quigley, who represents the 32nd District, was joined in the panel discussion by state Assemblyman-elect Anthony Chiappone of the 31st District; Frank Arcelo, a member of the New Jersey Charter School Association; and Susan Guerson, principal of the Learning Community Charter School.

Charter school advocates at the forum urged Quigley and Chiappone to help change the funding formula for charter schools, which currently receive 90 percent of the funding on a per student basis that public schools receive.

In Abbott districts, the disparity is even worse, since the charter schools receive none of the so-called "parity aid" to equalize spending between rich and poor districts.

According to a chart presented by Arcelo, Jersey City Public Schools spend \$14,744 on every elementary school student. But if that same student transferred to the Golden Door Charter School in Jersey City, the school would only receive \$8,272 from the state, he said.