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Nominee's rulings under scrutiny

Judge Sonia Sotomayor will face the usual litmus tests as her U.S. Supreme Court nomination faces Congressional scrutiny: her feelings about reproductive rights, past rulings involving worker rights, her stand regarding bench rulings as an alternative to legislation.

But what in Sotomayor's background hints at her treatment of education-related cases? The national magazine *Education Week* offers a breakdown of the nominee's rulings as they relate to

schools, including one that bears strong similarities to the Forest Grove case currently under U.S. Supreme Court consideration.



Sonia Sotomayor

Read more [details](#) from *Education Week*, including links to other case commentary.

High Court affirms NJ's school funding change

Approval from the state's Supreme Court means New Jersey can move forward with plans to shuffle the way it distributes money to schools. The 5-0 decision gave the go-ahead for legislators to stop funneling extra money toward so-called Abbott districts that are the poorest in the state.

Ending that burden means the state may have more money for other districts, since the 31 Abbott districts have been funded at a rate higher than average. Opponents say it ignores the challenges that come from educating children in an area where poverty levels are high.

Abbott districts in South Jersey are Camden, Burlington City, Gloucester City and Pemberton Township.

For years the state gave those districts funding at a higher rate than others in an attempt to balance the effects of poverty in those areas. That practice came as a result of the 1981 lawsuit *Abbott v. Burke* and litigation that came before it. In all, New Jersey has been challenged on its school funding system for 39 years.

Gov. Jon Corzine established a new school funding formula with an across-the-board rate that brought the case into court again. One of its components is the

demand that all schools – not just in Abbott districts -- provide free preschool to 3 and 4-year-olds from low-income families. A [Star-Ledger column](#) by the executive director of the Association for Children of New Jersey explained why a plan that sounds that good is already in jeopardy.

While last week's 5-0 Supreme Court decision is the last stop on the judicial road, the court left a small window open to further tweaking: Its decision sets a three-year time line for review of the new funding system.

An [Associated Press report](#) outlines the ruling and some of its ramifications.