

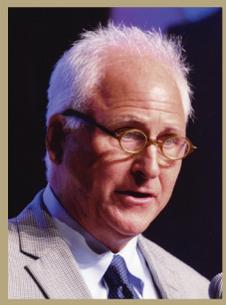
2016 NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Human and Civil Rights Award Winner

A Tireless Advocate for Fair and Equitable Funding of Public Schools

◆ David Sciarra, Esq. ◆

Rosa Parks Memorial Award



David Sciarra has used his skills as a lawyer to become one of the nation's most powerful advocates for every child receiving a quality public education. A University of California Berkeley Graduate and JD recipient from Temple University, Sciarra is a practicing civil rights lawyer and Executive Director of the Education Law Center (ELC).

The ELC legal team was responsible for the historic ruling in the *Abbott v. Burke* case. The decision requires New Jersey to restore and maintain adequate school funding, school construction, comprehensive school reform, and a series of academic and wraparound programs to support at-risk students in the state's urban school districts. *The New York Times* considers the *Abbott* ruling on education rights the most significant since *Brown v. Board of Education*.

Using the *Abbott* ruling, Sciarra was instrumental in securing the nation's first state high court order requiring a state, in this case New Jersey, to provide, "well planned high quality" preschool to all three and four-year-old children in poor communities. Sciarra writes, "Without a legal guarantee to early education, our most vulnerable children will continue to be deprived of the single most effective education reform, and the United States will continue to struggle to keep up with our global competitors." David Sciarra and the ELC legal team's victory have made New Jersey's Abbott Preschool Program a national model.

David Sciarra has co-authored the National Report Card on Fair School funding as well as published a multitude of articles and recommendations on education finance, early education and education law and policy. "The report card provides compelling evidence of the impact of unfair funding and the resulting deprivation of educational opportunities for students...the report card also shows how unfair funding affects the availability of essential education resources in the states," notes the ELC.

In addition to writing, David Sciarra is an adjunct professor at the University of Virginia Law School and has recently served on the U.S. Department of Education Commission on Education Equity and Excellence. Says an Education Law Center colleague, "His contribution in the court room, the halls of legislatures and through resources to likeminded litigators, legislators, and decision makers has proven invaluable to fighting the cause of civil rights for all children."