



# STATE OF NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: December 9, 2020

To: Chief School Administrators, Charter School and Renaissance School Project Leads, Directors of Approved Private Schools for Students with Disabilities

Route To: Directors of Special Education, Principals, Child Study Team Members, Teachers

From: Kim Buxenbaum, Director  
Office of Special Education

Register by: Registration is open and ongoing

## **Person-Centered Approaches in Schools and Transition (PCAST)**

The New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Special Education, in partnership with the Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities, is sponsoring training sessions on Person-Centered Approaches in Schools and Transition (PCAST). The PCAST Project is focused on improving the transition from school to adult life for students with disabilities. All person-centered approaches involve a discovery process that uses facilitated conversations and other methods to identify an individual student's strengths, goals, and desired vision for the future and to develop strategies and provide supports to overcome barriers.

PCAST workshops include information on facilitated planning methods, improving the IEP process, and implementing instructional approaches for groups of students. All three workshops described below include a series of modules that will be available to educators and family members statewide using both live instructor-led *and* independent self-paced modalities. Further explanation of **Option 1** and **Option 2** can be found via the link to the PCAST Registration page below.

Please Note: All workshops are being offered with two remote training modalities. Training modules in each workshop must be completed in sequence.

### **PCAST Workshop 1: An Introduction to Person-Centered Planning and Implementation for Families and Professionals**

Participants will be trained on the use and facilitation of a person-centered planning process. Participants will learn fundamental skills, including how to use planning tools and processes to implement person-centered approaches with students. Also covered will be methods for gathering, organizing and presenting person-centered information, as well as implementing strategies designed to improve post-school outcomes for students.

### **PCAST Workshop 2: Utilizing Person-Centered Approaches to Improve IEP Meetings**

This workshop will teach person-centered thinking skills and introduce tools designed to improve the quality of collaborative meetings, especially IEP meetings. Participants will leave with practical strategies and tools related to pre-meeting preparation, effective communication, management of difficult conversations and situations, approaches to sensitive topics, New Jersey Administrative Code requirements, and post-meeting implementation. Previous completion of "An Introduction to Person-Centered Planning and Implementation for Families and Professionals" is highly recommended but not required.

### **PCAST Workshop 3: Developing Group Person-Centered Planning with Students**

Participants will learn how to unbundle the skills and tools used in formal facilitated person-centered planning events for use with groups of students in both virtual and physical classrooms, while strengthening their person-centered planning skills.

Each participant will draft a group instruction implementation plan with associated outcomes and actions that are designed to meet the needs of the students they will be supporting. Example implementation frameworks will be used to assist participants in customizing their individualized strategies. Previous completion of “An Introduction to Person-Centered Planning and Implementation for Families and Professionals” is highly recommended but not required.

### **Registration**

Please find all information and instructions for registering for synchronous and hybrid virtual sessions on the [PCAST Registration Webpage](#). All workshops are delivered using the Rutgers Canvas Learning Management System and workshop registrants will be issued guest accounts. Live synchronous sessions will be delivered using the [HIPAA Compliant Zoom teleconferencing](#) platform.

**Note:** There is no charge to participate in any of the training sessions. Funding for these workshops is provided through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part B. School districts are encouraged to identify and invite parents to attend these training sessions. If you have questions regarding this series, please contact Bill Freeman at (609) 376-3734 or via email at [Bill.Freeman@doe.nj.gov](mailto:Bill.Freeman@doe.nj.gov).

c:       Members, State Board of Education  
          Angelica Allen-McMillan, Ed.D., Acting Commissioner of Education  
          NJDOE Staff  
          NJ LEE Group  
          Statewide Parent Advocacy Network  
          Garden State Coalition of Schools