



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: June 2, 2021
To: Chief School Administrators, Charter School and Renaissance School Project Leads, Administrators of Approved Private Schools for Students with Disabilities
Route To: Directors of Special Education, CST Staff, Transition Coordinators, Special Education Teachers
From: Kathy Ehling, Acting Assistant Commissioner
Division of Student Services

Dare to Dream Student Leadership Virtual Conferences 2021

The New Jersey Department of Education's Office of Special Education is sponsoring three Dare to Dream Student Leadership Virtual conferences on October 8, 15, and 29, 2021 that highlight information, strategies, and key practices to improve the self-advocacy skills of students with disabilities in middle and high school. Each virtual conference will feature keynote presentations by students and young adults with disabilities from districts across New Jersey who have demonstrated exemplary self-advocacy and leadership skills. Additionally, the virtual conferences will include a variety of breakout sessions led by students with support from their teachers that provide participants the opportunity to gain insight into the application of useful self-advocacy strategies to promote success now and in the future. Students, teachers, and others are encouraged to participate in this worthwhile conference, which has proven to be a positive learning experience for thousands of students across New Jersey over many years. Particularly impactful and effective is the Dare to Dream conferences' focus on students presenting to students. For examples, please [view videos of student keynote presentations](#) from prior conferences.

If you intend to have students and staff from your school attend a Dare to Dream Student Leadership Virtual conference this year, please begin to identify your talented students who are interested in presenting a keynote speech, breakout session, and/or other presentation of talent and strength such as poetry readings, musical performances, etc. at this event. You are encouraged to use the time between now and October to prepare these students to develop and practice their keynote speeches, breakout sessions, and other performances. If you would like some ideas or other assistance to prepare your students for presenting in this event, please contact Dr. Brian Berry at Brian.Berry@doe.nj.gov. There is no charge for participating in the conference, and parents are welcomed to attend. Registration information and other details about these conferences will be made available in a future communication.

Contact information

Please contact Bill Freeman at Bill.Freeman@doe.nj.gov or Brian Berry at Brian.Berry@doe.nj.gov for more information about the Dare to Dream Student Leadership Virtual conferences.

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