



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

# DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: September 8, 2021  
To: Chief School Administrators, Charter School and Renaissance School Project Leads, Administrators of Administrators of Approved Private Schools for Students with Disabilities  
Route To: Directors of Special Education, Principals, Child Study Team Members, Teachers  
From: Kathy Ehling, Assistant Commissioner  
Division of Student Services  
Registration: Open and ongoing

## Person-Centered Approaches in Schools and Transition

The New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Special Education, in partnership with the Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities, is sponsoring workshops on Person-Centered Approaches in Schools and Transition (PCAST). Person-centered approaches are applicable to all students with disabilities ages three through 21. PCAST staff from the Boggs Center facilitate training sessions that explore the use of person-centered approaches, including but not limited to facilitating individual person-centered plans, implementing person-centered practices in classrooms, and preparing for and conducting person-centered IEP meetings. A major focus of this practice is to improve the postschool outcomes of students with disabilities.

The PCAST project has been built on a foundation of respect, trust, and partnership with educators, families, and students working together to provide holistic person-centered supports for students in both primary and secondary education. All person-centered approaches involve a continuous process of discovery that engages educators, students, and their families with the goal of developing a deep understanding of each student and supporting students' personal visions for a positive future.

The PCAST workshops described below include a series of modules that will be available to educators and family members statewide using Live/Interactive Instructor-Led (**Option 1**) and Independent Self-Paced (**Option 2**) modalities. Additional information on both options can be found via the link to the PCAST Registration page below. Please note that 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 student planning, support, and postschool outcomes.

### **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 plan 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, 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 own 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 Option 1 or Option 2 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 invite parents of students with disabilities 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  
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Garden State Coalition of Schools  
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