



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: August 31, 2022
To: Local Educational Agency Leads, 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 Educational Services
Register by: Registration is open and ongoing

Training Opportunities for 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). Person-centered approaches are applicable to all students with disabilities ages 3 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, classroom implementation, and developing more person-centered IEP meetings and processes. This includes a focus on improving the transition from school to adult life for 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 their personal vision 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 Virtual instruction in the Fall. Training is scheduled to return to live in-person instruction in the Winter/Spring at the Learning Resource Centers (LRCs) throughout the state.

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 post-school 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 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 own strategies. Previous completion of *An Introduction to Person-Centered Planning and Implementation for Families and Professionals* is highly recommended but not required.

Registration

Information and instructions for registering for the virtual and in-person sessions can be found on the [PCAST Registration Webpage](#). Virtual workshops are delivered using the Rutgers Canvas Learning Management System and workshop registrants will be issued instructions on how to create a guest account.

These 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.

Contact information

If you have questions regarding this series, please contact Bill Freeman at (609) 376-3734 or via email at Bill.Freeman@doe.nj.gov.

c: Members, State Board of Education
NJDOE Staff
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
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