



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: November 8, 2023
To: Local Educational Agency Leads
Route To: Principals, Assistant Superintendents of Curriculum and Instruction, Supervisors, Instructional Coaches and Teachers
From: Jorden Schiff, Ed.D., Assistant Commissioner
Division of Teaching and Learning Services

Statewide Implementation of the Reading Acceleration Professional Integrated Development (RAPID and RAPID Plus) Initiatives

Two professional learning initiatives designed to support and bolster literacy instruction in kindergarten through grade six are being implemented statewide. These initiatives are tightly aligned with the knowledge and skills featured within the revisions to the New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts (NJSLS – ELA), adopted in early October by the New Jersey State Board of Education.

The Reading Acceleration Professional Integrated Development (RAPID) Initiative targets literacy in early elementary grades (kindergarten through grade three). The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) has partnered with nine organizations to provide free professional development opportunities in every county for New Jersey educators targeting learning acceleration in early literacy. The RAPID initiative features seven educator sessions addressing topics such as Orthography, Phonological and Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary and Comprehension, and one school leader webinar that focuses on designing and supporting high-quality literacy instruction in schools.

The NJDOE's [RAPID Initiative webpage](#) includes information about the program, including the partners available to each county and links to the professional learning series for registration. Please note that RAPID partners have disseminated information about their programming over the past month directly to Chief School Administrators and school leaders, and through respective county offices of education and social media. If information about the program has yet to be received, please check alternate email inboxes to ensure the message was not redirected (i.e., spam folders). After confirming, please contact RAPID@doe.nj.gov for a direct connection.

The complementary Reading Acceleration Professional Integrated Development (RAPID) Plus Initiative will provide educators with tools to support developing readers in upper elementary grades (grades four through six). The NJDOE has partnered with five institutions of higher education (IHE) to provide professional development opportunities in upper elementary literacy. The RAPID Plus initiative features four educator sessions addressing topics such as the Neurobiology of Reading, Advanced Word Study, Fluency, and Comprehension, as well as one school leader webinar that focuses on designing and supporting high-quality literacy instruction in schools.

RAPID sessions began in many counties in November and will continue into early January, while RAPID Plus sessions will begin statewide in early winter and continue throughout the spring of 2024. If an initial session was missed, please contact the county partner directly to discuss available options. Please note that RAPID Plus training dates and registration information is forthcoming.

Contact information

Please email the Division of Teaching and Learning Services at RAPID@doe.nj.gov with questions regarding the RAPID initiatives.

c: Members, State Board of Education
NJDOE Staff
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
Garden State Coalition of Schools
NJ LEE Group