



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

# DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: December 4, 2024

To: Local Educational Agency Leads

Route To: Principals, Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Supervisors, Directors of School Counseling, Directors of Student Services, Student Safety Specialists, School Nurses, Teachers

From: Kathy Ehling, Assistant Commissioner  
Division of Educational Services

Register by: January 6, 2025 for the Session on January 8, 2025  
January 12, 2025 for the Session on January 14, 2025

## Information Sessions on Participating in 2025-2026 DREAMS Program

Through the American Rescue Plan Act, the New Jersey Department of Children and Families (NJDCF) in collaboration with the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), invites district and school leadership to learn about an exciting opportunity for school districts to participate in the 2025-2026 DREAMS Program (Developing Resiliency with Engaging Approaches to Maximize Success). The DREAMS Program focuses on providing trauma-informed and healing-centered supports that assist staff and students in building positive relationships and emotional self-regulation. This program aims to promote healthy and healing school environments and to provide educators with supports to aid in both job satisfaction and in building classrooms conducive to student learning.

Participating DREAMS districts will:

- Receive training in The Nurtured Heart Approach® (NHA). NHA is a method for creating a supportive and positive school culture that prioritizes the building of healthy relationships, recognizes every student's greatness, and promotes the development of self-regulation strategies for both staff and students.
- Participate in trainings on trauma-related topics such as *Adverse Childhood Experiences*, *Trauma Informed Practice for Educators*, *Understanding the Impact of Toxic Stress and Developmental Trauma on the Brain*, and others.
- Have access to online evidence-based and best practice related resources and training materials.
- Identify two staff members from your school district to become NHA certified trainers.
- Be connected to the NHA Community through a NHA mentor who will aid in the implementation planning of NHA within the school/district.

All Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are eligible to participate in this program. As a partnership between the NJDCF and NJDOE, this program and all associated training and professional development will be at **no cost** to LEAs but will require a commitment of time and designated staff to support the program. DREAMS districts that participated in previous/current years are welcome to register for this session if looking to expand the DREAMS program to additional schools in your district. Please note there are a limited number of spaces available.

### Key steps/actions

To learn more about required district commitment and in order to be considered for admission into the DREAMS Program, a school or district administrator should participate in an information session on either [January 8, 2025](#) from 9:30-10:30 a.m. (registration open until January 6, 2025) or [January 14, 2025](#) from 1:00-2:00 p.m. (registration open until January 12, 2025). Please [register](#) for one of the sessions as soon as possible to confirm your interest in participating in the program.

### Contact information

Should you have additional questions, please contact Children's System of Care via [stacy.reh@dcf.nj.gov](mailto:stacy.reh@dcf.nj.gov) or the Office of Student Support Services via [SafeSupportiveSchools@doe.nj.gov](mailto:SafeSupportiveSchools@doe.nj.gov).

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