



**For Immediate Release**

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**Statement from Education Commissioner Kevin Dehmer on the New Jersey Department of Education's Response to the U.S. Department of Education's "Reminder of Legal Obligations Undertaken in Exchange for Receiving Federal Financial Assistance and Request for Certification Under Title VI and *SFFA v. Harvard*"**

**Trenton, NJ** — On April 17, 2025, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) submitted a letter to the United States Department of Education (USDE) in response to the USDE's recent [request](#) for additional certifications of compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI) and the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *SFFA v. Harvard*, 600 U.S. 181 (2023).

The response is based on the same principles articulated in the NJDOE's March 6, 2025 [broadcast memo](#), and clarifies the commitment that the NJDOE and New Jersey Local Education Agencies (LEAs) already make to fully comply with all State and federal laws and to provide protections that empower all students to realize their full potential.

The USDE's "Reminder of Legal Obligations Undertaken in Exchange for Receiving Federal Financial Assistance and Request for Certification under Title VI and *SFFA v. Harvard*" (Request for Certification), sent to all State Education Agencies on April 3, 2025, asked the NJDOE to certify to its compliance with Title VI and the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *SFFA v. Harvard*. It further asked State Education Agencies to collect and submit certifications on behalf of all LEAs in their state. Although the Request for Certification initially set a submission deadline of 10 days from receipt, the USDE recently extended the deadline until April 24, 2025.

The NJDOE's [response](#) to the USDE concerning the Request for Certification reiterates its prior certification of compliance with the requirements of Title VI, which was provided to the USDE in 2017 as part of the NJDOE's Every Student Succeeds Act Consolidated State Plan, which remains in effect. It also affirms that New Jersey LEAs annually certify compliance with Title VI as part of the NJDOE's grant administration process; these existing LEA certifications also remain in effect. The NJDOE's letter further points out that the terms of the current Request for Certification are ambiguous, leading to multiple possible interpretations. As an example, the Request for Certification references "certain DEI practices" or "illegal DEI" without defining those terms or providing context.

New Jersey LEAs do not need to complete and submit the certification form provided in USDE's Request for Certification because all LEAs previously attested to their compliance with Title VI as part of their annual grant application process. For this reason, certifications related to this request from USDE sent to NJDOE by LEAs will not be submitted to USDE.

The NJDOE will continue to comply with all settled statutory and legal requirements of both State and federal law. Moreover, the NJDOE remains steadfast in its commitment to ensuring that every student in the State of New Jersey has equal access to educational opportunities and the freedom to attend school in a safe and supportive environment.



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