



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: February 19, 2025

To: Local Educational Agency Leads

Route To: Principals, Assistant Superintendents of Curriculum and Instruction, Supervisors, Instructional Coaches, Teachers

From: Jorden Schiff, Ed.D., Assistant Commissioner
Division of Teaching and Learning

Introduction to the Office of Learning Equity and Academic Recovery (LEAR)

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) is pleased to announce the creation of the Office of Learning Equity and Academic Recovery (LEAR), established by legislation, [P.L. 2024, c.53](#), signed into law in August 2024. LEAR has been established to transform New Jersey's approach to literacy instruction and advance academic recovery. This comprehensive initiative encompasses the legislation's six primary goals, each designed to create sustainable improvement in student literacy outcomes while advancing learning equity across the state; the goals are:

- Goal 1: Collect and analyze data to inform decision-making
- Goal 2: Coordinate resources
- Goal 3: Research best practices
- Goal 4: Provide district support
- Goal 5: Develop resources to support teaching and learning
- Goal 6: Establish a working group on student literacy

The Working Group on Student Literacy, established by literacy legislation, [P.L. 2024, c.52](#), will be releasing recommendations on evidence-based literacy strategies, identifying reliable tools for universal literacy screening, and ensuring access to high-quality instructional materials for students across the state.

Beginning in the 2025-2026 school year, local educational agencies (LEAs) will ensure compliance with state literacy legislation, [P.L. 2024, c.52](#), by conducting universal literacy screeners for all students in kindergarten through third grade twice a year. Based on screening results, districts must provide necessary supports in a manner consistent with the district's intervention and referral services, which may include additional screenings and targeted interventions to meet student needs. LEAs will also notify parents or guardians of screening results within 30 days of the screening period's conclusion, providing information on their child's performance and available support services. Screening data will be reported to the NJDOE in accordance with forthcoming guidelines.

To further support the implementation of evidence-based instructional practices to develop literacy skills, [P.L. 2024, c.52](#) also requires LEAs to deliver professional development to all educators serving preschool through sixth grade, including library media specialists, professionals supporting multilingual learners and students with disabilities, reading specialists, early literacy specialists, and speech-language specialists. The NJDOE is committed to providing clear guidance and robust resources to assist districts throughout this process, ensuring that all schools are equipped to meet these requirements effectively and support students in achieving literacy proficiency. The NJDOE intends to provide asynchronous professional development which satisfies these requirements through the [RAPID and RAPID Plus Initiatives](#). LEAs may elect to utilize the RAPID and RAPID Plus

resources or provide equivalent training meeting the requirements outlined in the law. Information on accessing the asynchronous trainings will be released at a later date.

Contact Information

Please email Natalie Franzi Dougherty, Director of the Office of Learning Equity & Academic Recovery at LEAR@doe.nj.gov with questions regarding the P.L.2024, c.52 requirements described above.

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