

Public Notice

Education

State Board of Education

Notice of Receipt of Petition for Rulemaking

Mandatory Relationship Skills and Positive Reinforcement Techniques Curriculum

Petitioner: Caleb L. McGillvary.

Take notice that on August 6, 2024, the New Jersey State Board of Education (State Board) received a petition for rulemaking from the above petitioner, requesting the State Board adopt new rules to implement a mandatory curriculum that focuses on developing relationship skills and positive reinforcement techniques for students in middle school through grade 12.

N.J.A.C. 1:30-4.1(b) and 6A:6-4.1(b) require a petition for rulemaking to state the substance or nature of the rulemaking that is requested, the reasons for the request and the petitioner's interest in the request, and references to the authority of the agency to take the requested action.

The petitioner seeks to require the curriculum to equip students with essential life skills that promote healthy interpersonal relationships, emotional intelligence, and positive behavior reinforcement. The petitioner's request also states that the curriculum will enhance students' overall well-being and future success.

The petitioner states that research consistently demonstrates that strong relationship skills and the ability to positively reinforce behavior are critical for personal and professional success. The request also states that adolescents face numerous social and emotional challenges that can impact their academic performance and mental health. The petitioner further states that integrating a structured curriculum focused on relationship skills and positive reinforcement techniques will foster students' social and emotional development, contribute to a more supportive and empathetic school environment, and better prepare students for the complexities of adult life.

The request does not identify whether the petitioner seeks to add the requested regulations to an existing chapter of Title 6A of the New Jersey Administrative Code and, if so, which one, or if a new chapter should be created. The requested regulations are as follows:

(a) Scope and Applicability

1. This rule shall apply to all middle schools and high schools within the State of New Jersey.
2. All students from grade six through 12 must complete the prescribed curriculum as a prerequisite for graduation from middle school and high school.

(b) Curriculum requirements

1. The curriculum shall include instruction based on the following books:
 - i. *Four Ways to Click* by Amy Banks;
 - ii. *The Relationship Cure* by John Gottman;
 - iii. *The Five Love Languages* by Gary Chaman; and
 - iv. *The Dog Whisperer* by Paul Owens.
2. The curriculum shall be integrated into existing health or social studies courses and taught by certified teachers who have received appropriate training.

(c) Implementation and Training

1. The New Jersey Department of Education shall provide training and professional development opportunities for teachers to effectively deliver the curriculum.
2. Schools shall be provided with the necessary resources, including copies of the prescribed books and supplementary materials.

(d) Assessment and Evaluation

1. Student progress and comprehension shall be assessed through both formative and summative evaluations.

2. The effectiveness of the curriculum shall be reviewed annually, with input from educators, students, and parents, to ensure continuous improvement.

The petitioner's request states that the four books referenced in the requested regulations were selected for their evidence-based approaches and proven effectiveness in teaching relationship skills and positive reinforcement techniques.

The request does not indicate the petitioner's interest in it or reference the agency's authority.

In accordance with N.J.A.C. 1:30-4.2, the Department shall subsequently mail to the petitioner, and file with the Office of Administrative Law, a notice of action on the petition.