



State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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CHRIS CHRISTIE
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO
Lt. Governor

KIMBERLEY HARRINGTON
Acting Commissioner

June 20, 2017

TO: Chief School Administrators
Charter School and Renaissance School Project Leads

ROUTE TO: Directors of Special Education

FROM: John Worthington, Director
Office of Special Education Policy and Procedure

SUBJECT: Acting Special Education Ombudsman

I am pleased to announce that Dr. Dolores Walther has been appointed to the newly created position of Acting Special Education Ombudsman, effective immediately. Dr. Walther brings a wealth of special education experience to the position, and will serve as an excellent, neutral resource for those involved in the special-education system in the state.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act guarantees a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) to all students with disabilities, and affords certain procedural protections to those students and their families in order to ensure their right to FAPE. The State of New Jersey also has statutes in place to protect the interests of students with disabilities, including the establishment of the position of Special Education Ombudsman to serve as a resource to students, parents and educators with respect to special-education rights and services.

Dr. Walther can be reached at (609) 292-0147 or by email at specedombudsman@doe.state.nj.us. Additional information about the role of the ombudsman is available on the New Jersey Department of Education's [Special Education Ombudsman webpage](#). Please share this information with members of your special-education community.

JW/KM/dw

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| c: Members, State Board of Education | Administrators of Approved Private Schools |
| Kimberley Harrington, Acting Commissioner | for Students with Disabilities |
| Senior Staff | Administrators of College-Operated Programs |
| Diane Shoener | Administrators of a State Facility |
| Kimberly Murray | Statewide Special Education Advisory Council |
| Executive County Superintendents | Agencies or Organizations Concerned with |
| Executive County Business Officials | Special Education |
| County Supervisors of Child Study | Statewide Parent Advocacy Network |
| Receiving Schools | Garden State Coalition of Schools |
| Executive Directors of Regional Achievement Centers | NJ LEE Group |