December 20, 2010

TO: Chief School Administrator  
Director of Special Education  
Administrator of a State Facility  
Administrator of a Charter School  
Administrator of an Approved Private School for the Disabled  
Administrator of a College-Operated Program  
Statewide Special Education Advisory Council  
Agencies or Organizations Concerned with Special Education

FROM: Barbara Gantwerk, Assistant Commissioner  
Division of Student Services

SUBJECT: Guidance with Respect to Goals and Objectives in Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)

The purpose of this memo is to clarify the requirements regarding the need for annual goals and objectives in IEPs for students with disabilities, particularly for those students being educated in general education programs.

Clarification:  
The consideration of annual goals and objectives must be made on an individual student basis, according to the unique needs of a child. A decision regarding what is appropriate for an individual student cannot be predetermined or made solely based upon a student’s placement. For each student with a disability, the student’s IEP team must consider the need for goals and objectives that: (a) enable the student to be involved and progress in the general education curriculum; and (b) address other educational needs that result from the student’s disability. See N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.7(e) 3.
While it is recognized that a student’s disability may not impact learning in every subject area, the IEP for each student with a disability must include one or more goals and related objectives that are responsive to the considerations in (a) and/or (b) above. These factors must be considered regardless of placement. See 34 CFR §300.320(a 2). The goal(s) and objectives should represent modified instructional content and/or address other skill areas, including but not limited to, social skills, communication skills, organizational skills, study skills, self-regulatory skills, transition related skills, etc. in response to the individual student’s needs. At the next IEP meeting for each student with a disability in your district, the IEP team must review the IEP and ensure that one or more goals and related objectives are included in the IEP.

Please ensure that this memo is distributed to all child study team members and other staff participating in the development of Individualized Education Programs. If you have questions regarding the implementation of this requirement, please contact Dr. Peggy McDonald via email at peggy.mcdonald@doe.state.nj.us or by telephone at 609-633-6956.

Thank you for giving this memo your attention.

BG/PO/PM/JW/
c: Andrew Smarick
   Peggy O’Reilly
   Peggy McDonald
   John Worthington
   County Superintendents
   County Supervisors of Child Study