



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: January 21, 2026

To: Local Educational Agency Leads, Administrators of Approved Private Schools for Students with Disabilities

Route To: Directors of Special Education, Principals, Child Study Team Members, Teachers

From: Kathy Ehling, Assistant Commissioner
Division of Educational Services

2025-2026 Winter/Spring Training Opportunities for Person-Centered Approaches in Schools and Transition (PCAST)

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), in partnership with the Boggs Center on Disability and Human Development, sponsors training sessions on Person-Centered Approaches in Schools and Transition (PCAST). Person-centered approaches are applicable to all students ages three through 21. Training sessions are facilitated by PCAST staff from the Boggs Center and explore the use of person-centered approaches, including, but not limited to, facilitating individual person-centered plans, implementing practices within classroom settings, and developing more person-centered Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings and processes. These efforts include a focus on improving the transition from school to adult life.

The PCAST project is grounded in a foundation of respect, trust, and partnership among educators, families, and students working collaboratively to provide holistic, person-centered support across both elementary and secondary settings. All person-centered approaches involve an ongoing process of discovery that engages educators, students, and families in developing a deep understanding of each student and supporting the student's personal vision for a positive future.

The PCAST workshops described below will be available to educators, students and family members statewide using the Learning Resource Centers (LRCs) and other locations throughout the state. Virtual sessions may be offered for select sessions. See the registration webpage link below for additional information.

PCAST Workshop 1: An Introduction to Person-Centered Planning and Implementation for Families and Professionals (VIRTUAL SESSION AVAILABLE)

Participants will be trained in the use and facilitation of a person-centered planning process. Participants will learn fundamental skills, including how to use planning tools and processes to implement person-centered approaches with students. Methods for gathering, organizing, and presenting person-centered information, as well as implementing strategies designed to improve student planning, support, and post-school outcomes will be covered.

PCAST Workshop 2: The Collaboration Advantage: Practical Tools for Transforming IEPs and Every School Meeting!

This interactive, one-day workshop empowers educators and school teams through providing them tools that transform not just IEP meetings, but all types of meetings, into productive, person-centered conversations. Grounded in real-world practices in New Jersey schools, participants will explore strategies to improve collaboration, resolve challenges, and increase engagement with families and students.

PCAST Workshop 3: Developing Group Person-Centered Planning with Students in Classroom Settings

Participants will learn how to unbundle the skills and tools used in formal facilitated person-centered planning events for use with groups of students in the classroom while strengthening their person-centered planning skills. Each participant will draft a group instruction implementation plan with associated outcomes and actions designed to meet the needs of the students they will be supporting. Example implementation frameworks will be used to assist participants in customizing strategies. *Previous completion of An Introduction to Person-Centered Planning and Implementation for Families and Professionals is highly recommended but not required.*

PCAST Supplemental Workshop 1: Supported Decision-Making (SDM) in Person-Centered Practices Participants will learn specific skills, tools and strategies needed for building decision-making capacity in students of all ages. Participants will share strategies and barriers through group discussions and will develop individual action plans to support the implementation of what is learned. Resources will be shared that help build SDM into planning processes including group planning efforts in classroom settings. This module is designed as a supplement to the Introduction to Person-Centered Planning and Implementation workshop. That training is therefore highly recommended.

PCAST Supplemental Workshop 2: Culturally Responsive Facilitation in Person-Centered Practice Participants will use person-centered thinking skills and tools to learn about implicit bias, microaggressions, and culturally relevant practices. These tools and related activities will help participants to develop and enhance facilitation skills that are culturally relevant to students, families, and communities. Previous completion of An Introduction to Person-Centered Planning and Implementation for Families and Professionals is highly recommended but not required.

PCAST Supplemental Workshop 3: Supporting the Participation of Students Who Use Limited Words to Communicate in Person-Centered Planning

This workshop will share person-centered strategies developed in New Jersey schools to assist team members in supporting students who use limited words to communicate. Participants will leave the session with ready-to-implement tools and approaches they can use to increase student participation in their planning. Previous completion of An Introduction to Person-Centered Planning and Implementation for Families and Professionals is highly recommended but not required.

Registration

Please find all information and instructions for registering for sessions on the Boggs Center Registration Webpage under the PCAST – Person-Centered Approaches in School and Transition dropdown tab.

Note: There is no charge to participate in any of the training sessions. Funding for these workshops is provided through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part B. Local educational agencies are encouraged to identify and invite parents to attend these training sessions. Questions regarding this series can be emailed to oseinfo@doe.nj.gov.

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