Person-Centered Approaches in Schools and Transition (PCAST) Training Opportunities

The New Jersey Department of Education’s Office of Special Education, in partnership with the Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities, is sponsoring regional training sessions on Person-Centered Approaches in Schools and Transition (PCAST). The PCAST Project has a focus on improving the transition from school to adult life for students with disabilities. All person-centered approaches involve a discovery process that uses facilitated conversations and other methods to identify an individual’s strengths, goals, and vision to develop strategies to provide supports and overcome barriers. PCAST workshops include information on facilitated planning methods, improving the IEP process, and implementing classroom-based approaches. Three training options are available statewide.

PCAST: Person-Centered Planning and Implementation for Educators and Families
This workshop is open to educators and family members. Participants will be trained on the use and facilitation of a person-centered planning process. Participants will learn fundamental skills, how to use planning tools, and processes to implement person-centered approaches in schools. Also covered will be methods for gathering, organizing and presenting person-centered information, as well as, implementing strategies designed to improve post-school outcomes for students. “Person-Centered Planning and Implementation” is a two-day workshop. Completion of day one is required to attend day two.

PCAST: Utilizing Person-Centered Approaches to Improve IEP Meetings
This workshop is open to educators and family members. The workshop will teach person-centered thinking skills and introduce tools designed to improve the quality of collaborative meetings, particularly IEP meetings. Participants will leave with practical strategies and tools related to pre-meeting preparation, effective communication, management of difficult conversations and situations, approaches to address sensitive topics, New Jersey Administrative Code requirements, and post-meeting implementation. “Utilizing Person-Centered Approaches to Improve IEP Meetings” is a two-day workshop. Completion of day one is required to attend day two. Previous completion of “Person-Centered Planning and Implementation” is recommended but not required.

PCAST: Developing Group Person-Centered Planning in Classroom Settings
While strengthening their person-centered planning skills, participants will learn how to unpack the skills and tools used in formal facilitated person-centered planning events for use in classroom-based activities. Each participant will draft a classroom implementation plan with associated outcomes and actions that are designed to meet the needs of the students that will be supported. Example implementation frameworks will be used to assist participants in customizing their individualized strategies. This is a one-day workshop.
Registration
Please find dates, times and locations, and submit registrations on the PCAST registration webpage. There is no charge for educators or parents to participate in any of the training sessions. Districts are encouraged to attend training sessions as a team and identify and invite parents.

If you have questions regarding this series, contact Bill Freeman at (609) 376-3734 or Bill.Freeman@doe.nj.gov.

Fall/Spring Training Locations:
- Learning Resource Center North Satellite – East Orange
- Learning Resource Center South – Glassboro (Rowan University)
- Learning Resource Center Central – Trenton
- Fairleigh Dickinson University – Teaneck

c: Members, State Board of Education
Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D., Commissioner
NJDOE Staff
NJ LEE Group
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
Garden State Coalition of Schools