

Person Centered Approaches in Schools and Transition (PCAST)

District Participation Agreement

What is PCAST?

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), in partnership with Rutgers, The Boggs Center, will conduct planning, development, and activities aimed at promoting effective transition for students with disabilities through the use of person-centered approaches. As part of the PCAST project, the Boggs Center will provide expertise in person-centered approaches to the critical process of planning for effective transition from school to adult life, including employment and engaging with adult service systems.

The use of person-centered approaches is effective for all students, especially those with significant disabilities, because the process does not try to fit the person to the program but rather informs the development of supports based upon the student's strengths, interests and needs. There are challenges related to using these approaches in the context of the school environment. These challenges highlight the need to identify and overcome barriers in order for the student to successfully transition into adult life.

The project aims to identify strategies to positively impact post-school outcomes without creating undue burden on school district personnel.

What assistance can participating school districts receive?

- Design and facilitate district-specific project planning events
- Training and technical assistance on person centered thinking and planning approaches for education personnel, students and families
- Technical assistance in the development of site-specific person centered planning tools
- Demonstrate person centered planning methods and techniques
- Observation/feedback on person centered planning and other facilitation by school personnel
- Facilitate process mapping of present and future transition planning processes
- Provide electronic resources on person centered practices and transition to districts
- Assist in facilitation to access of the adult service system services and resources
- Training and technical assistance in connecting person centered planning to IEPs
- Facilitation training on negotiation and problem solving techniques
- Training and technical assistance on development of person centered lesson plan activities
- Training and technical assistance on program improvements using person centered approaches

What potential benefits might the project offer?

- Improved post-school outcomes for students
- Improved relationships and collaboration with families
- Improved decisions for educational placement and support strategies
- Improved self-advocacy, self-determination, self-direction skills of students
- Increased level of student participation in pre-IEP planning and IEP meetings
- Improved skills of facilitators and other contributors to IEP and transition processes
- Increased person centered IEP goals (customized as opposed to generic)
- Improved quality and consistency of daily supports for students
- Improved retention of knowledge over time about what works best for each student
- Increased knowledge of students and families about adult service systems
- Improved transfer of person centered information from school to adult services

What is required in order to participate?

As a participating school district in the PCAST project we agree to:

- Obtain superintendent support and approval for project participation
- Obtain administrative support and approval for project participation
- Designate a project coordinator to handle scheduling and coverage for project related technical assistance, training and person centered planning, and other events as needed
- Attendance at project orientation and training sessions by leadership
- Commitment by leadership to maintain involvement including quarterly progress meetings
- Disseminate brief electronic project evaluation surveys to involved parties
- Share what you learn with other school districts through the PCAST Community of Practice (CoP)

A school administrator must complete and sign this section. Signatory may be the Superintendent, Director of Special Services or Building Principal.

Signing indicates administrative commitment to the creation or expansion of person centered approaches in the school district. The undersigned assures that the school and/or district will provide the necessary administrative supports, including those bulleted requirements above.

Please print name: _____ Title: _____

Phone Number _____ Email Address: _____

Administrator's Address: _____

Administrator's Signature: _____ Date: _____