



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: March 6, 2025
To: Local Educational Agency Leads
From: Kevin Dehmer, Commissioner

New Jersey Joins Multistate Guidance for Schools on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Initiatives

This broadcast provides notification of the release of [guidance](#) jointly issued by a group of states, including New Jersey, to assist schools and districts regarding accessibility policies and practices in education. The States of Illinois, Massachusetts, New York, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey, Nevada, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, and the District of Columbia developed guidance entitled "Multistate Guidance for Schools on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Initiatives." In light of the release of a U.S. Education Department (USED) "Dear Colleague" [letter](#) on February 14, 2025, and a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) [document](#), issued on February 28, 2025, targeting diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility policies and programming in schools, the guidance seeks to help schools understand the legality, viability, and importance of such policies and programs.

It is critical to note, and as the guidance makes clear, "nothing in the 'Dear Colleague' letter or FAQ changes existing law and well-established legal principles that encourage – and even require – schools to promote educational opportunity for students of all backgrounds." Indeed, providing a welcoming, supportive educational environment free of discrimination in all its forms is central not only to longstanding practice and values in New Jersey schools, but to New Jersey law.

State law and regulations continue to require school districts to implement curricula that promote inclusivity; safeguard students from the harms of bullying and harassment based on their actual or perceived characteristics such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability, among other characteristics; ensure students are not subject to bias-based harassment from students or staff in a way that creates a hostile school environment; and other crucial protections that empower all students to realize their full capabilities.

For additional questions on the specific application of this guidance in accordance with state and federal law within your community, districts are encouraged to consult their legal counsel.

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