

March 2013

## PRESERVE & PROTECT

### NJEA Calls on Members to Preserve New Jersey's High-Quality Special Education Programs to Protect our Most Vulnerable Students!

In what it calls its effort to 'free up districts from unnecessary burdens,' the Department of Education has accepted recommendations from the Education Transformation Task Force and proposed changes to special education regulations that will diminish services and weaken the successful education programs New Jersey's special education students now receive. NJEA is extremely concerned about these proposed regulations and with the overall direction the DOE is taking with respect to special education. We need members to stand up and speak out if we are going to preserve the outstanding services we have for our most vulnerable students.

Some of the potentially harmful proposed changes include:

- ***Designating teachers and any other licensed staff member, including guidance counselors, librarians and nurses to serve as case managers of students with disabilities.***
  - ✓ NJEA opposes this change. Teachers should be teaching. Considering the new evaluation regulations, adoption of the core content standards and the upcoming PARCC assessments, teachers need to concentrate on their instructional responsibilities. Students will suffer if teachers' time and efforts are divided between instruction and case management. Case management is time consuming and should be left in the hands of child study team members who are licensed and have the specialized expertise for that responsibility.
- ***Allowing school districts 90 days to complete an evaluation of a student with a disability, who transfers from one New Jersey school district to another in-state district, or when a student transfers from an out-of-state district to a New Jersey district.***
  - ✓ NJEA opposes this change. Current code requires the evaluation be done in 30 days. And with good reason -- 90 days is too long for a student to be inappropriately placed -- almost 1/3 of a 10-month school year. IEP's need to be in place as soon as possible, so that a teacher can provide the student with the supports needed to become a successful learner.

...over, please

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