

## **EDUCATION**

### **COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION**

#### **Programs and Practices to Support Student Achievement**

##### **Readoption: N.J.A.C. 6A:13**

Proposed: November 7, 2016, at 48 N.J.R. 2192(a).

Adopted: April 4, 2017, by Kimberley Harrington, Acting Commissioner, Department of Education.

Filed: April 4, 2017, as R.2017 d.085, **without change**.

Authority: P.L. 2007, c. 260.

Effective Date: April 4, 2017.

Expiration Date: April 4, 2024.

#### **Summary of Public Comments and Agency Responses:**

The following is a summary of the comments received from members of the public and the Department's responses. Each commenter is identified at the end of the comment by a number that corresponds to the following list:

1. Lisa Bakanas, New Jersey Association of School Librarians
  2. Jean Public
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1. COMMENT: The commenter suggested amendments to N.J.A.C. 6A:13-2.1, Standards-based instruction, to reflect changes in the role of the school library and the need for stu-

dents to have access to up-to-date resources and the services of State-certified school library media specialists.

The commenter stated a report by the Center for International Scholarship in School Libraries at Rutgers University concluded that school librarians and thriving school library programs contributed to improvements in assessment scores, development of inquiry-based learning, increased interest in reading, and an increase in discriminating reading. The commenter stated the report further showed that school libraries functioning as centralized learning centers connected to classroom instruction produce literate and informed learners who can thrive in a digital, knowledge-based world, provide an understanding of the information and technology students will confront as digital citizens, and set the stage for student-initiated inquiry. The commenter also stated too many school districts are choosing to eliminate school library media specialists as indicated by a survey conducted by the New Jersey Library Association that found there are 20 percent fewer school library media specialists than there were in 2007-2008.

The commenter suggested the following amendments to N.J.A.C. 6A:13-2.1(h) (additions in bold; deletions in brackets):

“All school districts shall provide library-media services that are connected to classroom studies in each school building, [including] **providing** access to computers, district-approved instructional software, appropriate [books] **digital and print materials** including novels, anthologies, [other] reference materials **and curation of openly licensed educational resources**, and **other** supplemental materials that motivate students to read in and out of school, [and] to conduct research **and to support the development of students’ digital learning, inquiry learning, information literacy and technological lit-**

**eracy preparing students with career and college readiness skills.** Each school [district] shall provide these library-media services under the direction of a certified school library media specialist.” (1)

RESPONSE: The Department appreciates the commenter’s suggested amendments to N.J.A.C. 6A:13-2.1(h) and the focus on the importance of library-media services and their role in student development. The Department will consider the suggested amendments during its thorough review of how the Federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) will affect the chapter and the resulting amendments.

2. COMMENT: The commenter stated the rules set forth for high-poverty school districts should apply equally to all students in all parts of the State. The commenter stated she does not believe in inequality in education whereby some school districts receive more than others, but it should be equal according to the Constitution. The commenter also stated a child in an average school district may need help as much as any child in a high-poverty school district. (2)

RESPONSE: The chapter implements State law with respect to high needs school districts, specifically the School Funding Reform Act (SFRA), P.L. 2007, c. 260. Although the measures that address the unique needs of at-risk students enrolled in high-poverty and high-need school districts are not required to be implemented in all school districts, school districts have the discretion to implement the provisions set forth in Subchapter 3.

In addition, other regulatory provisions address the supports and services available to all students in all school districts throughout the State.

### **Federal Standards Statement**

The readopted rules do not exceed requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act or other Federal requirements or standards. Therefore, no Federal standards analysis is required.

**Full text** of the readopted rules can be found in the New Jersey Administrative Code at N.J.A.C. 6A:13.