

**§7201. Policy and purpose**

The policy of the State for the education of children with disabilities is as follows. [PL 2005, c. 662, Pt. A, §22 (AMD).]

**1. Equal educational opportunities.** All students must be provided with equal educational opportunities and all school administrative units shall provide equal educational opportunities for all children with disabilities.

[PL 2005, c. 662, Pt. A, §22 (AMD).]

**2. Least restrictive education alternative.**

[PL 2005, c. 662, Pt. A, §22 (RP).]

**2-A. Natural or least restrictive environment.** To the maximum extent appropriate:

A. Early intervention services must be provided in natural environments, including the home, and community settings in which children from birth to under 3 years of age without disabilities participate; and [PL 2005, c. 662, Pt. A, §22 (NEW).]

B. Children with disabilities at least 3 years of age and under 22 years of age, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, must be educated with children without disabilities. Special classes, separate schooling or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment may occur only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. [PL 2023, c. 450, §2 (AMD).]

[PL 2023, c. 450, §2 (AMD).]

**3. Students diagnosed as deaf.** A student diagnosed as deaf must be educated with students without disabilities whenever possible and must be educated under the principle of the least restrictive educational environment as set forth in state laws and rules and federal laws and regulations.

[PL 2005, c. 662, Pt. A, §22 (AMD).]

**4. Parent's right to be a member of the team.** Parents, surrogate parents or guardians have the right to be a member of the team that will carry out duties and responsibilities in accordance with rules established by the commissioner.

[PL 2005, c. 662, Pt. A, §22 (AMD).]

**5. Accessible instructional materials; visual impairment including blindness; Braille instruction.** All students must have access to accessible instructional materials and may receive instruction in Braille as part of their individualized family service plans or individualized education programs. A student may not be denied the opportunity of instruction in Braille solely because the student has some remaining vision. If Braille is not provided to a child who is blind, the reason for not incorporating Braille in the individualized family service plan or individualized education program must be documented in the individualized family service plan or individualized education program. Accessible instructional materials and provisions for the accessibility of online learning programs for individuals with disabilities must be in alignment with the accessible instructional materials provisions of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, Public Law 108-446, 118 Stat. 2647 and in alignment with the universal design provisions of the 1998 amendments to the federal Higher Education Act of 1965, 20 United States Code, Chapter 28 contained in the federal Higher Education Amendments of 1998, Public Law 105-244, 112 Stat. 1581.

[PL 2009, c. 508, §3 (AMD).]

**6. Participation in cocurricular activities.** Eligibility for a child with a disability to participate in cocurricular activities may not be denied solely because the student is enrolled in a reduced course load when the reduced course load is due to the student's disability, as long as the student is satisfactorily completing the requirements of the educational components of an individualized family service plan or

individualized education program and is otherwise in compliance with the program. If the student is not satisfactorily completing the educational components of an individualized family service plan or individualized education program or is not otherwise in compliance with the program, the student's eligibility may be determined in the same manner as the eligibility of a child without disabilities who is not satisfying the applicable academic standards.

[PL 2007, c. 466, Pt. C, §7 (AMD).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 1981, c. 693, §§5,8 (NEW). PL 1991, c. 292, §2 (AMD). PL 1995, c. 95, §1 (AMD). RR 2005, c. 2, §13 (COR). PL 2005, c. 662, §A22 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 466, Pt. C, §7 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 508, §3 (AMD). PL 2023, c. 450, §2 (AMD).

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