

Governor Phil Murphy

# ICYMI: New Jersey Department of Education Initiates State Takeover of Lakewood Township School District

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**TRENTON** – Following a recent court ruling and years of documented failures, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) announced today that it has filed an

[Order to Show Cause \(https://www.nj.gov/education/news/2026/Order\\_to\\_Show\\_Cause\\_012-01-26\\_Complete\\_Filing.pdf\)](https://www.nj.gov/education/news/2026/Order_to_Show_Cause_012-01-26_Complete_Filing.pdf)

regarding the Lakewood Township School District (District) as the initial step toward full State intervention in the District. This filing represents a significant and necessary action to address persistent deficiencies that have denied Lakewood students the thorough and efficient education guaranteed by the New Jersey Constitution.

On September 8, 2025, the Appellate Division of the New Jersey Superior Court, in *Alcantara v. Allen-McMillan* (*Alcantara II*), determined that Lakewood public school students “suffer from an ongoing constitutional deprivation,” and identified the causes of that deprivation as a “consistent pattern of neglect and misfeasance by various elected and appointed Lakewood school leaders with respect to critical governance, finance, curriculum, transportation and special education recommendations made by [the NJDOE] over the years.”

The Order to Show Cause calls on the District to demonstrate why the State should not initiate a full State intervention of the Lakewood Public School District, pursuant to State law (N.J.S.A. 18A:4-24 and N.J.S.A. 18A:7A-15).

“For more than a decade, the New Jersey Department of Education has been working with the Lakewood Township School District to address ongoing fiscal and operational concerns that impact students, staff, parents, and the entire Lakewood community,” **said New Jersey Department of Education Commissioner Kevin Dehmer**. “For all of those impacted, most especially the students of Lakewood, we are obligated to intervene in this situation and provide the district with the necessary oversight to course correct.”

Today’s filing outlines the extensive and significant steps the NJDOE has taken to support the District. These efforts have included financial assistance, logistical and administrative support, and educational resources. The NJDOE has also installed State monitors and provided tens of millions of dollars in State aid advances to help the District meet its immediate obligations; however, significant deficiencies persist, necessitating today’s filing.

For a copy of the Order to Show Cause, please click [here \(https://www.nj.gov/education/news/2026/Order\\_to\\_Show\\_Cause\\_012-01-26\\_Complete\\_Filing.pdf\)](https://www.nj.gov/education/news/2026/Order_to_Show_Cause_012-01-26_Complete_Filing.pdf).

For a copy of the Administrative Order for Full State Intervention, please click [here \(https://www.nj.gov/education/news/2026/AdministrativeOrder.pdf\)](https://www.nj.gov/education/news/2026/AdministrativeOrder.pdf).

For a copy of the State Intervention Plan for the Lakewood Township School District, please click [here \(https://www.nj.gov/education/news/2026/StateInterventionPlan.pdf\)](https://www.nj.gov/education/news/2026/StateInterventionPlan.pdf).

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