January 28, 2013

TO:   Chief School Administrators  
      Charter School Lead Persons  
      Directors of Special Services  

FROM:  Peggy McDonald, Director  
        Office of Special Education Programs  

SUBJECT:  Dare to Dream Student Leadership Conferences

The Office of Special Education Programs is sponsoring regional *Dare to Dream* Student Leadership conferences that highlight strategies and information to prepare students with disabilities for college and career readiness. Each conference features keynote presentations from accomplished students and young adults with disabilities who have demonstrated exemplary self-advocacy and leadership skills. Additionally, the conference program includes a variety of concurrent workshop sessions that provide conference attendees opportunities to gain insight into the transition from school to adult life process. The conference gives students the opportunity to participate in workshops led by their peers on topics such as: self-discovery, student self-advocacy, learning styles, developing a career path and understanding your rights and responsibilities in college. Dare to Dream has long been a positive and empowering experience for thousands of New Jersey’s students.

I would also like to encourage you to have some of your students prepare a workshop session for the conference. You may also wish to select a student to present a keynote presentation regarding any of the topics listed above.

This year, each professional will be provided with a ‘toolkit’ of activities and resources to prepare students to participate in and even lead their own Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting. In addition, a workshop will be offered for professional staff on Department of Education initiatives including Person-Centered Approaches, Structured Learning Experiences (SLEs), Community-Based Instruction and New Jersey Career Assistance Navigator (NJCAN).

There is no charge to students or staff for the conference. Continental breakfast and lunch are provided to all participants. Professional staff from your district must accompany students to the conference in sufficient numbers to ensure adequate supervision of your students throughout the day. If you have questions regarding the conference, or if your students wish to conduct a workshop or keynote, please contact Bob Haugh at (609) 633-6431. Please visit the following link for registration information: [http://education.state.nj.us/specialed/](http://education.state.nj.us/specialed/).

c:  Members, State Board of Education  
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