March 4, 2014

TO: Chief School Administrators
    Charter School Lead Persons
    Directors of Special Education
    Administrators of a State Facility
    Administrators of an Approved Private School for Students with Disabilities
    Administrators of a College-Operated Program
    Agencies or Organizations Concerned with Special Education
    Statewide Special Education Advisory Council

FROM: Susan Martz, Assistant Commissioner
      Division of Student and Field Services

SUBJECT: Brain Injury Awareness Month

March is Brain Injury Awareness Month. As such, it is the time to focus on improving the public’s understanding of prevention, treatment, educational strategies, and services needed to support individuals with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and their families. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates 1.7 million people sustain TBIs annually in the United States, including thousands of children and young adults in New Jersey. A TBI can be caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head or a penetrating head injury that disrupts the brain’s normal functions. Such traumatic brain injuries can range from mild, including concussion, to severe, with varying short- or long-term effects physically, cognitively, emotionally and socially.

To provide educators and parents with a better understanding of this public health issue, the New Jersey Department of Education has included resources on TBI on our website at: http://www.state.nj.us/education/specialed/resources/. Information and circulation materials are also available through our statewide Learning Resource Centers at: http://www.state.nj.us/education/lrc/. The Department’s model concussion policy and guidance is available at: http://www.state.nj.us/education/aps/cccs/chpe/concussions/. In addition, the Brain Injury Alliance of New Jersey (BIANJ) provides training, webinars and resource materials. Their website also includes information about a free online course, with professional development hours for school professionals, available through Rutgers University, Division of Continuing Education (see http://bianj.org/brain-injury-training-institute).
I encourage you to share the resources about TBI by distributing this memorandum. Together we can help to prevent TBI and better support our students who are challenged with TBI.

SM/PM/CSE/fl/030414 Broadcast Memo for Brain Injury Awareness Month.doc

c: Members, State Board of Education
   Senior Staff
   Diane Shoener
   Amy Ruck
   Peggy McDonald
   Nancy Curry
   Executive County Superintendents
   Executive Directors for Regional Achievement Centers
   Executive County School Business Administrators
   County Supervisors of Child Study
   NJ LEE Group
   Garden State Coalition of Schools
   Brain Injury Alliance of New Jersey
   Higher Education Programs in Special Education and Communication Disorders