TO: Chief School Administrators
Charter School Lead Persons

FROM: Evo Popoff, Assistant Commissioner/Chief Innovation Officer
Division of Charter Schools, School Choice, and Educational Technology

SUBJECT: The New Jersey Department of Education’s Office of Innovation Announces its New innovateNJ Initiative and Website

The New Jersey Department of Education’s (NJDOE) Office of School Innovation is pleased to announce the launch of the new innovateNJ initiative. It is the NJDOE’s belief that innovation in education is necessary to ensure the continuous improvement of learning experiences and outcomes for New Jersey’s students. The goal of the innovateNJ initiative is to help showcase, promote and scale innovative programs and models in schools and districts across the state to ensure that our students are keeping pace in a rapidly changing global landscape. As the first step in launching this initiative, the NJDOE is also pleased to announce the launch of the newly designed innovateNJ website at http://www.nj.gov/education/innovateNJ/.

The innovateNJ website, and the initiative on the whole, is comprised of three separate, but related, components that are designed to support schools and districts as they explore, design and implement next generation models for teaching and learning. In addition to providing support and information to schools and districts, each component of the innovateNJ initiative provides an opportunity for schools and districts to actively participate in fostering the growth of innovation in New Jersey:

- **innovateNJ Community**: The innovateNJ Community is a network of districts and schools that share a passion for innovation in education and a willingness to explore new, student-centered models of teaching and learning. Members of the innovateNJ Community will be able to take advantage of the benefits of being active participants in a network of like-minded administrators and educators, including, the ability to share, learn and collaborate with other schools and districts; identify opportunities to pilot innovative models and practices; and guide the
development of state policy to help foster and support school innovation by working directly with the NJDOE. The NJDOE is currently seeking members for the first innovateNJ Community cohort and we encourage districts or schools that are interested in becoming members to review and submit the innovateNJ Community Application available now on the innovateNJ website.

- innovateNJ Clearinghouse: The innovateNJ Clearinghouse is a centralized repository of information and resources curated by the NJDOE relating to innovation and education. In addition to spotlighting effective school and classroom models, the innovateNJ Clearinghouse will also provide information on qualified, effective, and innovative providers and programs, as well as relevant events, conferences and policies at the local and national level. Visit the innovateNJ Clearinghouse to learn more.

- innovateNJ Initiatives: The innovateNJ Initiatives are innovative programs and projects that are happening within New Jersey schools and districts with the support of the NJDOE. The first major innovateNJ Initiative will be the upcoming Early Childhood Personalized Learning pilot that is part of the state’s Race to the Top Early Childhood Grant.

We encourage anyone interested in learning more about innovateNJ, and in particular the innovateNJ Community, to visit the innovateNJ website http://www.nj.gov/education/innovateNJ/ and to contact Takecia Saylor, Director of School Innovation at 609-633-3965.

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c: Members, State Board of Education
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   Executive Directors for Regional Achievement Centers
   Executive County School Business Administrators
   NJ Lee Group
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