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:  Division of Innovation Announces Results of its Request for Qualified Innovation Partners (RFQ)

March 18, 2014

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) Office of Innovation is pleased to announce its newly released list of selected Qualified Innovation Partners. Addressing the State’s assessed need to identify organizations capable of providing school districts guidance in their efforts to develop and implement innovative instructional practices, the NJDOE issued a Request for Qualified Innovation Partners (RFQ) in the spring of 2013.

This list is comprised of organizations that have demonstrated expertise in improving the learning experiences and outcomes for students by supporting schools and districts in the implementation of innovative next generation models of instruction that are student centered and promote college and career readiness. The Qualified Innovation Partners were selected from a group of applicants who responded to the RFQ based on their capacity to support schools and districts through the entirety of the innovation process from design and planning to implementation and scaling. While this list is not comprehensive of all support organizations that may be helpful to districts, we hope this resource is helpful to you as a starting point.

Having met the requirements necessary to be considered, each organization offers viable approaches to assisting school districts in their efforts to implement and sustain innovative instructional program approaches. To become a Qualified Innovation Partner, all interested organizations and individuals completed an application. Applicants were not preapproved in any
way and those listed are not indicative of the vast array of partners that can be chosen by New Jersey school districts. Potential innovation partners are not limited to this list, and LEAs must comply with the statutory (N.J.S.A. 18A: 18A-4.1 et seq.) and regulatory (N.J.A.C. 5:34-4.1 et seq.) requirements in order to contract with any of the partners on the list. However, the organizations listed on the innovateNJ website met the following selection components per the completion of the RFQ:

i. Concept of Innovation and Description of Services;
ii. Demonstrated Experience and Track Record;
iii. Organizational Capacity and Personnel Qualifications;
iv. Maintenance of Partner Relations

A key component of the innovateNJ initiative, this list can be found on the innovateNJ Clearinghouse website http://www.nj.gov/education/innovateNJ/ and will be updated on an ongoing basis per future reissuance of the RFQ. Descriptions of each qualified partner can also be found http://www.nj.gov/education/innovateNJ/clearinghouse/partners.htm.

The NJDOE encourages other organizations to apply or reapply for future opportunities to assist in our charge to meet the needs of all of the students of the State of New Jersey regardless of their zip code or socio-economic status by affording equitable access to education through innovative and effective models of teaching and learning. We also encourage organizations, schools and districts to visit the innovateNJ Clearinghouse website to learn more about future Requests for Qualifications that will cover other aspects of innovation in education, including Early Childhood personalized learning programs as part of the New Jersey Department of Education’s Race to the Top Early Childhood Grant.