TO: Chief School Administrators  
Charter School Lead Persons  
Nonpublic School Administrators  

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

SUBJECT: Hour of Code and other Educational Technology initiatives  

As you may be aware, the New Jersey Assembly recently passed Resolution 170, which recognizes the week of December 8 through 14, 2014 as "Computer Science Education Week" and encourages schools to participate in the Hour of Code by providing an opportunity for every student to try computer science for one hour during that week. We are pleased to announce that over 600 schools and/or districts in New Jersey have indicated that they plan to take part in the Hour of Code this year. That is great news, but we want to encourage all districts and schools to take part in the Hour of Code so they can introduce their students to this increasingly important 21st Century Skill and recent addition to the State’s Core Curriculum Content Standard 8. To support this effort, the Department would like to hear about, and spotlight, your Hour of Code stories and initiatives. Please send an email to edtech@doe.state.nj.us with a short description of what you have done in your district, school or classroom for Hour of Code in the past, or what you plan to do this year and we will consider posting your stories on the Department’s web site. Please be sure to include your name and the name of your school and district in your email.

You can learn more about the Hour of Code at http://hourofcode.com/us. To learn more about how to include coding into your curriculum in general, you can find resources at www.code.org.

Other Educational Technology Initiatives  

Digital Learning Day  
This school year’s date for the Alliance for Excellent Education’s Digital Learning Day (DLD) is March 13, 2015. DLD was started as a way to celebrate new ways of teaching and learning. It's an opportunity for teachers, librarians, informal educators and others working with youth to try out new digital tools and innovative instructional practices. For more information, please go to http://www.digitallearningday.org/. Video profiles of previously featured school districts are now available along with many free online educational resources. You can also sign up to receive email alerts about upcoming webinars, news and updates regarding Digital Learning Day.
National STEM Video Game Challenge
The Smithsonian, in partnership with the Joan Ganz Cooney Center and E-Line Media, present the 2014-15 National STEM Video Game Challenge. This year’s Challenge will be accepting entries through February 25, 2015. The Challenge Program includes game design workshops for youth, educators and parents in communities across the country, and a series of workshops to explore the power of intergenerational play and design. For more information, please go to http://www.stemchallenge.org/stem/#/home.

The Department remains committed to assisting districts, schools and educators in the use of technology to prepare all students for college and careers. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Sue Sullivan, Standard 8 Coordinator, at sue.sullivan@doe.state.nj.us.

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c: Members, State Board of Education
   David C. Hespe, Acting Commissioner
   Senior Staff
   Executive County Superintendents
   Curriculum Supervisors and Coordinators
   Educational Technology Directors and Coordinators
   Executive Directors for Regional Achievement Centers
   Charter Schools Office
   NJ LEE Group
   Garden State Coalition of Schools