



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

PO Box 500

TRENTON, NJ 08625-0500

CHRIS CHRISTIE
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO
Lt. Governor

CHRISTOPHER D. CERF
Acting Commissioner

June 16, 2011

Dear District Superintendents and Charter School Leaders:

You are all aware of the enormous influence our educators have on student learning. The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) is committed to advancing policies that support local efforts to improve the practices of teachers and principals and lead to gains in academic achievement.

The foundation for much of this work is an evaluation system that fairly assesses teacher practice in the classroom, accurately measures student progress, and provides useful information to educators, administrators, policymakers, and families. New Jersey is joining states and districts across the nation in making improved evaluations a priority.

In March, Governor Christie's Task Force on Educator Effectiveness released [recommendations](#) for new educator evaluation systems. In the 2011-2012 school year, we will pilot a new teacher evaluation system in several LEAs based on these recommendations. Today, I encourage you to consider partnering with us in this important initiative.

The [Excellent Educators for New Jersey](#) program (EE4NJ) will provide funding to a select number of LEAs committed to working with the state to develop, implement, and continuously improve a system based on teacher practice and student performance.

We view this pilot as an excellent opportunity for the state to collaborate with educators, district leaders, and other stakeholders and jointly design a statewide framework. The pilot also gives districts the opportunity to access additional funding while gaining familiarity with a system that will ultimately apply across New Jersey. Because this initiative is of such importance to our schools and students, NJDOE is making a total of \$1.1 million available to its LEAs partners.

Educators from pilot districts will be fully engaged in the program. Teachers and those who observe them will receive ample training. Educators will also have the opportunity to join or provide feedback to district advisory committees, which will regularly inform the state on successes, challenges, and opportunities for improvement.

We encourage LEAs that want to help shape New Jersey's educator evaluation system to [apply to the EE4NJ grant program](#).

To learn more, please attend the [Technical Assistance Session on June 20](#), read our [FAQs](#), and visit our website: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/EE4NJ/>.

Important events and timeline:

- **Technical assistance session, Monday, June 20:** Online registration must be completed at <http://education.state.nj.us/events/> no later than June 20, 2011.
- **Consult with nonpublic schools in your district, as soon as possible:** In accordance with NCLB, applicants must discuss with their non-public schools the ways in which nonpublic school teachers and administrators could participate in the pilot program. This discussion must occur prior to submitting the application.
- **Letter of Intent, by June 30, 2011:** In order to gauge interest in this grant program, we request that any LEA interested in developing an application submit a Letter of Intent electronically to marisa.miller@doe.state.nj.us
- **Application deadline, 4:00 pm, July 28, 2011**

Every child deserves a highly effective teacher. Every teacher deserves the opportunity to improve his or her craft. Excellent Educators for New Jersey will help us accomplish these goals and many others. We are excited to undertake this critically important work, and I hope you will carefully consider this chance to place your LEA at the forefront of reform.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. D. Cerf', written in a cursive style.

Christopher D. Cerf
Acting Commissioner

CDC/AS/gm/S_EE4NJ

c: Andrew Smarick
Executive County Superintendents
Jessani Gordon
NJLEE Group
Garden State Coalition