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*innovate*NJ



COMMUNITY

We Want YOU! The [Application](#) for *innovate*NJ membership is now OPEN

*innovate*NJ is New Jersey’s initiative to support innovation and practice by fostering sharing and collaboration, cultivating projects, and convening practitioners and partners. Through your active participation as an *innovate*NJ member, the establishment of next-generation instructional practices as a standard within classrooms will promote and heighten the college and career readiness levels of our students.

The *innovate*NJ Fall Convening Making Strides towards Increasing Access and Equity

*Innovate*NJ held it’s 2015 Fall Community Convening on October 15th at Kean University. Superintendent Michael DaVino from Springfield School District kicked off the event with an insightful approach to budgeting that showcased ways in which school and district leaders could design, implement, and sustain next generation practices, programs, and models within their districts. A. Harry Moore and Toms River School District gave an energizing demonstration of some of the partnerships initiatives they’ve implemented to provide innovation access to their special needs student population. With the students from Toms River communicating via Google Hangouts, students from A. Harry Moore engaged the audience in an all-inclusive dance performance with the use of Lego Mindstorm robots.

Serving as the host of the convening was the School of Natural, Applied, and Health Sciences in conjunction with James Lerman, Director of STEM Impact Grant and Possibility Zone Makerspace. *Innovate*NJ Members gained access to Kean University’s brand new Makerspace Possibility Zone where they were able to explore the facility and discuss Makerspace startup challenges, advantages, and possibilities.

Following the tour was an inspiring presentation by the author of “Worlds of Making: Best Practices for Establishing a Makerspace for Your School”, Laura Fleming. Ms. Fleming exposed attendees to a multitude of development and themed Makerspace options that can be used to connect and engage students in curriculum-aligned innovative practices.

Wrapping up the series of Makerspace presentations was an interactive presentation by Long Branch Public School District, who not only showed *innovate*NJ members how they implemented a MakerSpace within their school districts, but shared opportunities of how districts can begin to think about connecting their schools to higher education institution resources. This year’s event included helpful information sessions as well as interactive demonstrations and cross-district sharing opportunities that showcased the remarkable strengths of the *innovate*NJ community.



School district leaders participate in a 5 minute challenge to create air-generated Lego cars.



Students of Toms River and A. Harry Moore perform with Lego Mindstorm robots



*Innovate*NJ Members tour Kean University’s Makerspace Possibility Zone.

innovateNJ: Network Expansion Southern Hub Possibilities Tour

innovateNJ seeks to expand further across the state of New Jersey by magnifying the number of southern district representatives within the *innovateNJ Community*. On November 20th, 2015, the Office of School Innovation will hold the 2015 *innovateNJ Possibilities Tour: Southern Hub*. The Possibilities Tour, hosted by Voorhees Township School District will allow districts to see firsthand all the great opportunities the *innovateNJ Community* has to offer schools in New Jersey's Southern districts. Member districts, Voorhees and Waterford, will showcase the wide-ranging possibilities that have been available to them through the *innovateNJ Community*. Following a tour of Voorhees Middle School, district representatives will also gain insightful advice from Voorhees and Waterford school representatives and will have the opportunity to participate in a Q&A session.



innovateNJ Proposes National Mentorship

As standard practice within the *innovateNJ Community*, cohort members and Thought Partner districts are asked to partner with one another to pilot innovative practices, and explore next generation school models. As a means of achieving our goal of establishing a statewide as well as a national network, *innovateNJ* plans to partner with the Digital Promise League of Innovative Schools to build a two-way mentorship model. Based on district profiles, Superintendents will work with other districts leading a student population that is largely different than their own. Partnered districts will be asked to collaborate on a shared goal and connect virtually over the course of a school year. This initiative will serve as an innovative collaborative learning opportunity for leaders, teachers, and students. It will also scale the positive culture shift on a national level as resources are shared.



On Dec. 7-13 Computer Science Education Week will celebrate the Hour of Code.

The Hour of Code is a global movement reaching tens of millions of students in 180+ countries. Anyone anywhere can organize an Hour of Code event.

Share your videos and pictures of Hour of Code activities with our community by emailing us at innovation@doe.state.nj.us



The Office of Innovation and *innovateNJ Community* districts members will be attending the 2015 iNACOL Blended and Online Learning Symposium on November 9-11. The presentation, *A State's Approach to Catalyzing Innovation through Blended and Personalized Learning*, will discuss New Jersey's approach to supporting innovation across the state.



To explore new opportunities for entrepreneurship, innovation and hands-on learning experiences, New Jersey will hold a MakerSpace Day on March 18th and 19th.

We urge you to send pictures and videos of innovative practices such as *Computer Science Education Week* and/or *Hour of Code* to innovation@doe.state.nj.us

