



Join the innovateNJ Community!

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) is pleased to announce the establishment of the *innovateNJ Community* – the central component of the state’s *innovateNJ* initiative to help foster, support and scale district and school innovation across the state. It is our fundamental belief that innovation in education is imperative if we are not only to continuously improve the learning experience and outcomes for our students, but if we are to keep pace with an ever-changing world to ensure that students are prepared for the future. Our guiding principle in supporting this work is that innovation occurs best not through top-down mandates, but by bringing together like-minded educators and administrators in an environment of openness and collaboration and providing them with the resources and support needed to explore, implement and scale next generation models of teaching and learning.

From these core beliefs is born the *innovateNJ Community* - a network of districts and schools that share a passion for improving outcomes for students through innovation. In keeping with our guiding principle, the work of the *innovateNJ Community* will be driven largely by its member districts and schools, with guidance and support from NJDOE. This application will serve to identify the next cohort of members in the *innovateNJ Community*. Membership is voluntary and is open to all districts across the state who satisfactorily complete this application and demonstrate a commitment to the following organizing tenets:

- Members must demonstrate a willingness and ability to use technology and other “real-world” innovations to support teaching and learning
- Members must be active participants in the *innovateNJ Community* by not only attending community events, but by actively sharing and collaborating with other members
- Members must use data to inform the design and continuous improvement of their classroom models
- Members must possess a passion for exploring and designing student-centered, next generation school and classroom models that promote college and career readiness for students.

To apply to become a member of this community of innovators, please complete and submit the application form on the NJDOE website by April 8, 2016. If you are interested in the work of the *innovateNJ Community* but are not sure if you are ready to commit to joining at this time, do not worry, there will be opportunities in the future to become a member and NJDOE will provide updates on the community’s work on the new *innovateNJ* web site. If you have any questions please contact us, innovation@doe.state.nj.us.

Evo Popoff
Chief Innovation Officer and Assistant Commissioner - New Jersey Department of Education



innovateNJ Community Application

General Information about This Application

What is *innovateNJ*?

innovateNJ is the New Jersey Department of Education's exciting new initiative to help showcase, promote and scale innovative programs and models in schools and districts across the state. Three distinct but interconnected components comprise the core work of *innovateNJ*:

- the *innovateNJ Community* described in more detail below;
- the *innovateNJ Clearinghouse* to spotlight, and provide resources on, effective, research-based programs, products, providers and policies that are being used across the state and the country; and
- the *innovateNJ Initiatives*, funded pilots that explore next generation, student-centered school and classroom models

To learn more about *innovateNJ*, please go to the *innovateNJ* website at www.nj.gov/education/innovateNJ/.

What is the *innovateNJ Community*?

The New Jersey Department of Education's *innovateNJ Community* is a network of New Jersey districts that share a passion for innovation in education and a willingness to explore new, student-centered models of teaching and learning. Although the NJDOE will provide guidance and support to the *innovateNJ Community* – for instance by hosting network events and meetings – its work will be driven largely by its members. 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 *showcase and share* their own innovative models and practices
- *Learning* about effective models and practices taking place across New Jersey and outside our borders
- *Collaborating* with other districts to explore next generation school or classroom models and to identify and tackle any challenges to the implementation of these student-centered models.
- *Identifying* opportunities (and resources) to pilot innovative models and practices

- *Engaging* through the *innovateNJ Community* with local, regional and national businesses and organizations that support school innovation
- *Guiding* the development of state policy to help foster and support school innovation by working directly with the NJDOE

Please see the “Membership Commitment and Eligibility Criteria” section below for more information on what is expected of members as active participants in the *innovateNJ Community*.

innovateNJ Community Membership Eligibility

The *innovateNJ Community* is open to all districts and charter schools across the state of New Jersey. In order to ensure district-level commitment to the work being conducted by the *innovateNJ Community*, this application is to be submitted and signed by the district Superintendent (or lead person from a charter school). Individual schools that wish to take part in the work of the *innovateNJ Community* must work with their district administration who will ultimately submit the application on behalf of the district and must commit resources at the district level (in addition to any individual school participation) as described below.

Membership Commitment

By applying to become an *innovateNJ Community* member, you are committing to be an active participant in the network. Because the success of the *innovateNJ Community* will ultimately be determined by the engagement and effort of its members, it is critical that members take a role in its activities. As such, members of the *innovateNJ Community* will be expected to:

- **Be Present** – Scheduling can be a challenge especially given all of the work taking place within a district or charter school, but members are expected to make an effort to attend *innovateNJ Community* events. Although a schedule of events has not yet been finalized, an effort will be made to schedule, at a minimum, quarterly meetings (either in person or virtually) of the *innovateNJ Community*
- **Be Open** – Communities are only successful if members give to the community as much as they take; thus, members must be open to sharing their own experiences and contributing to the work of other members
- **Be Engaged** – Although the NJDOE will provide guidance and support for the *innovateNJ Community*, the network’s activities – from the defining the scope of its work, identifying topics for collaboration and meeting agenda – will be driven largely by the engagement of its members.

Application Criteria

Although all districts and charter schools across the state are eligible to become members of the *innovateNJ Community*, the community's success is dependent on ensuring that members have the willingness, and the capacity, to implement innovative educational models. As such, applications received by the NJDOE will be reviewed, and selections made based on, the following criteria:

I. Commitment to the work of the *innovateNJ Community* (20% of total score)

Applicants must provide a commitment plan that, at a minimum, identifies a district (or charter) leader who will serve as the primary liaison with the *innovateNJ Community* and articulates the availability of the lead person and other district or charter personnel to take part in *innovateNJ Community* activities. Other aspects of the plan could include the identification of other resources (e.g., space, funding, work with other communities of practice) that the applicant could make available to the *innovateNJ Community*, or other activities and systems that the applicant will put in place to support their *innovateNJ Community* lead within the district.

II. Potential for Impact (30% of total score)

In selecting the initial cohort of members to the *innovateNJ Community* it is important that we identify not only those applicants who, because of the systems already in place within the district, are best poised to leverage the work of the community to impact the lives of their students, but that will ensure that the cohort, as a whole, is representative of the state to optimize the potential impact of the community's work for other districts and charter schools. As such, applicants will need to provide information regarding:

- The district's or charter school's current demographic and funding data
- The district's or charter school's current academic performance, student growth and high school graduation data
- Data relating to district's or charter school's technology readiness to support robust learning environments and digital learning. the District level leadership involvement and guidance

III. Innovation and the Applicant's strategic vision (50% of total score)

There is no pre-requisite that an applicant possesses experience implementing innovative school or classroom models. However, preference will be given to those applicants who can articulate and demonstrate their commitment to innovation as a strategy for improving student outcomes and promoting college and career readiness, and/or have experience implementing next generation, student centered school or classroom models. Applicants should:

- Describe the role that innovation plays in the applicant's strategic plan and how the applicant believes that innovation can support student learning and outcomes

- Provide evidence of the support that has already been committed to innovative work (e.g., dedicated funding, staffing, facilities, schedule changes, etc.), and how the vision has been shared and communicated with stakeholders
- Articulate any goals and/or metrics that have already been identified to measure the impact of the applicant's vision
- Describe any innovative programs or pilots – in particular those with a focus on student-centered or personalized learning – that the applicant has already implemented, including an overview of the design and planning process and any results.
- Articulate their approach to using data as part of a process of continuous improvement

PART II – Potential for Impact

- 1) District or Charter School acknowledgements or awards relating to innovation (if applicable; please attach a separate sheet if more space is required):

<u>Name of Award</u>	<u>Year Received</u>

School District Characteristic and Student Demographic Data		
<u>Question</u>	<u>Response</u>	
Grade levels served by the District or Charter School:		
District or Charter Demographic Information:		
% Hispanic students:		
% African American students:		
% Caucasian students:		
% Asian/Pacific Islander students:		
% Other:		
% English Language Learners (ELL)		
% of students eligible for Free and Reduced priced meals:		
Average per-pupil funding amount for FY14 (Please indicate both State and Local funding sources):	State: Local:	
1. List any federal or private sector grants that would be utilized to support innovation in your schools (Race to the Top, Investing in Innovation, etc.)	Name of Funding Source:	Corresponding Dollar Amount:
	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
	4.	

3) Articulate any goals and/or metrics that have already been identified to measure the impact of the applicant's vision

4) Describe any innovative programs or pilots – in particular those with a focus on student-centered or personalized learning – that the applicant has already implemented or plans to implement, including an overview of the design and planning process and any results.

5) Describe your district's or charter school's approach to using data as part of a process of continuous improvement