

**GOOD MORNING CHAIRMAN SARLO, VICE CHAIRMAN STACK, AND MEMBERS OF THE SENATE BUDGET COMMITTEE.**

**LET ME INTRODUCE DAVID JOYE OF OUR DOE ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM AND KEVIN DEHMER OF OUR SCHOOL FINANCE TEAM. ALSO JOINING ME TODAY IS PETER SHULMAN, OUR DEPUTY COMMISSIONER.**

**TO SAY THAT THIS WAS AN ACTIVE YEAR IN EDUCATION IS A TREMENDOUS UNDERSTATEMENT. FROM ASSESSMENTS TO CHOICE TO TEACHER PREPARATION, THE DEPARTMENT HAS RELENTLESSLY PURSUED OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE TEACHING AND LEARNING THROUGHOUT THE STATE, ESPECIALLY FOR OUR LOWEST-PERFORMING STUDENTS.**

**THIS ADMINISTRATION CONTINUES TO HAVE AN UNWAVERING COMMITMENT TO ENSURING THAT EVERY STUDENT GRADUATES FROM HIGH SCHOOL READY FOR COLLEGE AND CAREERS. WE UNDERSTAND THAT IN TODAY'S ECONOMY, A POST-SECONDARY DEGREE PREPARES STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS IN CAREERS THAT WILL CHANGE MANY TIMES OVER THE COURSE OF ONE'S LIFE.**

**OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS, THIS ADMINISTRATION HAS PROVEN ITS COMMITMENT TO PROVIDING FUNDING FOR EDUCATION. ACCORDINGLY, IN THE FY17 BUDGET, THE GOVERNOR HAS PROPOSED, FOR THE SIXTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR, THE LARGEST APPROPRIATION OF MONEY FOR EDUCATION IN STATE HISTORY.**

**THIS YEAR, THE GOVERNOR HAS ALLOCATED \$13.3 BILLION TO TOTAL SCHOOL AID, WHICH IS AN INCREASE OF \$548 MILLION OVER THE RECORD SPENT IN FY16. THIS INCLUDES AN INCREASE OF \$94.3 MILLION IN DIRECT AID TO SCHOOLS, AND AN INCREASE OF \$401.5 MILLION TO TEACHERS' PENSIONS AND BENEFITS. THIS TOTAL REPRESENTS A YEAR-ON-YEAR INCREASE OF NEARLY \$550 MILLION, WHICH IS MORE THAN 7 TIMES CPI GROWTH, AT A TIME WHEN OVERALL ENROLLMENT ACROSS THE STATE HAS DECREASED.**

**THIS WAS THE CASE DESPITE ONE OF THE MOST CHALLENGING BUDGETS YET FOR THE ADMINISTRATION AS ALMOST ALL NEW DOLLARS IN THE BUDGET NEEDED TO BE COMMITTED TO BALLOONING EMPLOYEE PENSION AND BENEFITS COSTS. IN SPITE OF THESE CHALLENGES, THE ADMINISTRATION WAS ABLE TO INCREASE SCHOOL AID TO EVERY SINGLE DISTRICT IN THE STATE. THESE DOLLARS HAVE BEEN TARGETED FOR DIRECT SUPPORT TO CLASSROOMS AND PROGRAMS.**

**OUR GOAL FOR THIS YEAR'S SCHOOL AID DISTRIBUTION IS SIMPLY TO FIND A WAY TO RUN THE FORMULA SO AS TO ACCOUNT FOR ENROLLMENT CHANGES WHICH ARE THE PRIMARY DISTRICT COST DRIVER. RUNNING THE FORMULA ALSO ACCOMMODATES CHANGES IN PROPERTY WEALTH AND HELPS A MORE EQUALIZED DISTRIBUTION OF STATE AID. ALTHOUGH WE WERE NOT ABLE TO FULLY FUND THE FORMULA, WHICH WOULD HAVE REQUIRED CLOSE TO A BILLION DOLLARS IN MORE REVENUE, WE WERE ABLE TO RUN IT BASED ON THE AMOUNT ALLOCATED. THIS HELPED TO EQUALIZE OUR STATE AID DISTRIBUTION TO DISTRICTS.**

**WE HAVE ALSO HELD ALL DISTRICTS HARMLESS AGAINST THE LOSS OF AID FROM FY16 AND HAVE ADDED AN ADDITIONAL AID CATEGORY THAT WILL PROVIDE DISTRICTS WITH \$10 PER STUDENT IN ADDITIONAL AID (AN INVESTMENT OF APPROXIMATELY \$13 MILLION STATEWIDE) TO SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES.**

**IN THIS REGARD, THE STATE MUST WORK WITH LOCAL DISTRICTS TO DO TWO THINGS TO FULFILL EXPECTATIONS FOR THE WORK OF OUR LEARNING COMMUNITIES. FIRST, DATA MUST GET INTO THE HANDS OF TEACHERS. LET ME REPEAT THAT SINCE IT IS SO VITAL – WE MUST GET STUDENT INFORMATION, INCLUDING PARCC DATA, INTO THE HANDS OF TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LEADERS. SECOND, TEACHERS NEED TO BE ABLE TO WORK TOGETHER AND WITH THEIR PRINCIPAL AND SUPERVISORS TO DEVELOP A SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF THE DATA TO IMPROVE CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND CLASSROOM PRACTICE. THIS WORK WILL OCCUR WITHIN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES. THE ADMINISTRATION IS PROUD TO SUPPORT THIS WORK.**

**IN ADDITION, THE GOVERNOR HAS PROPOSED ALLOCATING \$1 MILLION TO FUND AN OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM WHICH WILL PROVIDE NEW EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS IN CHRONICALLY FAILING SCHOOLS TO ATTEND PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS THAT CAN BETTER SERVE THEIR NEEDS.**

**THIS YEAR'S BUDGET PROVIDES \$1.2 MILLION IN NEW FUNDING TO THE INTERDISTRICT PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM, BRINGING THE TOTAL TO NEARLY \$54 MILLION NEXT YEAR, SERVING 5,200 CHILDREN IN 129 DISTRICTS..**

**THE GOVERNOR'S PROPOSED BUDGET INCREASES THE STATE'S SHARE OF EXTRAORDINARY COSTS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION BY AN ADDITIONAL \$5 MILLION, TO A TOTAL OF \$170 MILLION. LOCAL SCHOOL OFFICIALS HAVE LONG NOTED THAT THEIR BUDGETS ARE PINCHED WHEN FACED WITH EXTRAORDINARY COSTS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION.**

**THE PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2017 BUDGET MAINTAINS FUNDING FOR PRESCHOOL EDUCATION TO A TOTAL OF \$656 MILLION. IN ADDITION, THE DEPARTMENT WILL CONTINUE IMPLEMENTATION OF OUR FEDERAL PRESCHOOL EXPANSION GRANT, WHICH DEDICATES \$70 MILLION TO INCREASE PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EXISTING PROGRAMS FOR 2,700 PRESCHOOLERS IN 17 DISTRICTS OVER 4 YEARS.**

**WE HAVE ALSO ESTABLISHED A NEW CATEGORY OF AID TO SUPPORT DISTRICTS THAT ARE EXPERIENCING LARGE CHARTER SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS. THE HOST DISTRICT AID WILL SUPPORT DISTRICTS AS THEY DOWNSIZE THEIR BUDGETS TO ACCOUNT FOR LOST STUDENTS. THIS BUDGET RIGHTSIZING TAKES TIME TO DO WELL IN ORDER TO NOT DIMINISH THE EDUCATION PROVIDED TO STUDENTS WHO REMAIN IN THE HOST DISTRICT SCHOOLS. AS WE STRIVE TO HOLD DISTRICTS HARMLESS, WE HAVE ALSO COMMITTED TO HOLDING CHARTER SCHOOLS HARMLESS AT A PER PUPIL LEVEL SO THAT THEY MAY CONTINUE TO SUPPORT STUDENTS SUCCESS IN EXTRAORDINARY WAYS.**

**WE HAVE TARGETED \$32 MILLION IN INCREASED AID TO SUPPORT THE ATLANTIC CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT THAT HAS EXPERIENCED A DEVASTATING LOSS OF RATABLES IN RECENT YEARS. WE RECOMMENDED THIS ONLY AFTER HAVING MADE ALL RESPONSIBLE CUTS TO THE BUDGET THAT DID NOT IMPACT EDUCATIONAL QUALITY.**

**THE ADMINISTRATION IS ALSO PURSUING WAYS TO ASSIST SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN SAVING DOLLARS. THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET CALLS FOR PLAN DESIGN COMMITTEES TO WORK TOGETHER TO IDENTIFY AND APPROVE \$250 MILLION IN COST SAVINGS IN PUBLIC EMPLOYEE AND RETIREE HEALTH CARE COSTS. IF THE COMMITTEES SUCCEED, AS WE BELIEVE THEY CAN AND EXPECT THEY WILL, MORE THAN 500 COUNTIES, MUNICIPALITIES, FIRE DISTRICTS, AUTHORITIES, SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND OTHER LOCAL GOVERNMENTS THAT VOLUNTARILY PARTICIPATE IN THE STATE PLANS WOULD SAVE APPROXIMATELY \$200 MILLION ANNUALLY. TO PUT THIS INTO CONTEXT, SOME 20 SCHOOL DISTRICTS WOULD SAVE OVER \$1 MILLION ANNUALLY.**

**LET ME DISCUSS SOME OF OUR INITIATIVES IN GREATER DETAIL.**

**WE ARE MOVING INTO IMPLEMENTING THE SECOND ADMINISTRATION OF THE PARCC ASSESSMENTS. PARCC TESTS REPRESENT THE NEXT EVOLUTION OF OUR STATE TESTING PROGRAM TO REFLECT BEST PRACTICES IN EDUCATION. THESE NEW TESTS FOCUS ON COMPUTER BASED ASSESSMENT OF APPLIED KNOWLEDGE IN MATH, CRITICAL THINKING AND CRITICAL READING. MANY OF THE TESTS OUR STUDENTS WILL BE ASKED TO TAKE IN THE FUTURE SUCH AS THE SAT ARE NOT ONLY ALIGNING WITH THESE SAME BEST ASSESSMENT PRACTICES BUT TURNING TO A COMPUTERIZED**

**DELIVERY FORMAT AS WELL. IN THIS WAY, THE PARCC TESTS ARE ALSO PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THE TECHNOLOGY RICH WORLD OF THE FUTURE. THIS EVOLUTION FROM ACCOUNTABILITY DRIVEN PURPOSES TO AN INDISPENSABLE INSTRUCTIONAL TOOL HAS BEEN UNDERWAY FOR DECADES IN NEW JERSEY.**

**AS WE MOVE INTO THIS SECOND ADMINISTRATION IN PARCC I WOULD LIKE TO NOTE HOW RESPONSIVE WE HAVE BEEN TO THE CONCERNS OF THE FIELD. FIRST, WE HAVE REDUCED TWO TESTING WINDOWS INTO ONE. SECOND, THERE IS LESS TESTING TIME – OVERALL, THE TESTS ARE 90 MINUTES SHORTER. THIRD, THERE ARE FEWER TEST QUESTIONS. FOURTHLY, THERE IS FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING – MOST DISTRICTS ARE EXPECTED TO COMPLETE TESTING IN TWO WEEKS OR LESS. LAST, DATA WILL BE RETURNED TO DISTRICTS FASTER – RESULTS ARE EXPECTED TO BE RETURNED TO DISTRICTS THIS SUMMER WHICH IS SEVERAL MONTHS SOONER THAN LAST YEAR.**

**AS WE IMPLEMENT OUR LEARNING BASED CHANGE PROCESS YOU SHOULD BE AWARE THAT WE HAVE LAUNCHED THE “FUTURE READY SCHOOLS NEW JERSEY” INITIATIVE. THIS INITIATIVE BUILDS OFF OF OUR SUCCESS IN DIGITAL READINESS LAST YEAR WHEN OVER 99% OF STUDENTS TOOK THE PARCC ASSESSMENT BY COMPUTER – THE HIGHEST OF ALL STATES ADMINISTERING PARCC. THE CHALLENGE BEFORE US SIMPLY PUT IS – ALTHOUGH OUR SCHOOLS MAY BE TECHNOLOGY READY FOR ASSESSMENTS, ARE WE INTEGRATING THE TECHNOLOGY EFFECTIVELY IN THE CLASSROOM? WE ARE ENGAGING IN A STATEWIDE CONVERSATION TO HELP SCHOOLS GAUGE THEIR READINESS FOR DIGITAL LEARNING FOCUSED ON PERSONALIZED LEARNING PRACTICES. THIS IS A VERY EXCITING PROJECT. I HOPE ALL SCHOOLS PARTICIPATE IN IT.**

**LET ME BRIEFLY HIGHLIGHT SOME OTHER WAYS THE DEPARTMENT IS SUPPORTING STUDENT LEARNING.**

**WE UNDERWENT A THOROUGH REVIEW OF THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND MATHEMATICS. THE REVIEW PROCESS INVOLVED OVER A THOUSAND KEY STAKEHOLDERS. EDUCATORS REFLECTED ON HOW THESE STANDARDS HAVE BEEN WORKING FOR THEIR STUDENTS AND HOW THEY COULD BE MADE CLEARER, STRONGER, AND MORE COHERENT. IN ALL, THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDED REVISIONS TO TWO HUNDRED TWENTY OF THE STANDARDS. THESE REVISIONS ARE UP FOR APPROVAL AT THE MAY 2016 STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING. THE ADMINISTRATION IS COMMITTED TO ENSURE WE HAVE THE BEST STANDARDS FOR NEW JERSEY’S STUDENTS.**

**WE HAVE ALSO CREATED NEW EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS INCLUDING HIGH QUALITY CHARTER SEATS. THE GROWTH OF HIGH QUALITY CHARTER SCHOOLS FITS INTO THE DEPARTMENT'S MISSION TO ENSURE THAT ALL STUDENTS GRADUATE HIGH SCHOOL READY FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER, ESPECIALLY IN AREAS THAT ARE IN NEED OF ADDITIONAL QUALITY SCHOOL OPTIONS. ON FEBRUARY 29, 2016, THE DEPARTMENT APPROVED THREE NEW CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATIONS, 16 EXPANSION REQUESTS, AND 19 APPLICATIONS FOR RENEWAL. IN THE 2016-17 SCHOOL YEAR, THERE WILL BE OVER 50,000 CHARTER SEATS IN THE STATE, A 10% INCREASE OVER THE 2015-16 SCHOOL YEAR.**

**DUE TO THE LEGISLATURE'S SUPPORT OF THE URBAN HOPE ACT, THREE RENAISSANCE SCHOOLS HAVE OPENED IN CAMDEN. THESE SCHOOLS PRESENT AN EXTRAORDINARY OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE EDUCATION FOR THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN IN THE COMMUNITY. TOTAL ENROLLMENT IS PROJECTED TO INCREASE BY APPROXIMATELY 650-700 STUDENTS FOR THE 2016-2017 SCHOOL YEAR – BRINGING THE TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS ATTENDING RENAISSANCE SCHOOLS THIS FALL CLOSE TO THREE THOUSAND.**

**WE ALSO CONTINUE TO PROGRESS IN OUR STATE OPERATED DISTRICTS, INCLUDING EXPANDING CAPACITY IN THE ADVISORY BOARDS AND SETTING A CLEAR PATH TO RETURN TO FULL LOCAL CONTROL. THE DEPARTMENT'S QSAC PROCESS PROVIDES A PATHWAY FOR RETURNING ELEMENTS OF DISTRICT AUTHORITY TO LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS, AND WE WILL CONTINUE TO FOLLOW THAT PROCESS. SUBSTANTIVE PROGRESS TOWARDS REGAINING LOCAL CONTROL HAS OCCURRED OVER THE LAST YEAR IN ALL DISTRICTS THAT HAVE BEEN STATE OPERATED FOR 3 OR MORE YEARS, AS FOLLOWS:**

- **JERSEY CITY:**
  - **IN OCTOBER 2015, JERSEY CITY REGAINED CONTROL OVER OPERATIONS AND PERSONNEL.**
  - **INSTRUCTION AND PROGRAM (I&P) IS THE ONLY REMAINING FUNCTION CURRENTLY UNDER STATE CONTROL.**
  
- **PATERSON:**
  - **IN FEBRUARY 2016, PATERSON REGAINED CONTROL OVER FINANCE AND PERSONNEL.**
  - **GOVERNANCE AND I&P ARE THE ONLY REMAINING FUNCTIONS CURRENTLY UNDER STATE CONTROL.**

- **NEWARK:**
  - **THE NEWARK EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS BOARD, APPOINTED BY GOVERNOR CHRISTIE AND MAYOR BARAKA FOR THE PURPOSE OF OUTLINING A PATH TO LOCAL CONTROL FOR NEWARK PUBLIC SCHOOLS, BEGAN MEETING IN SEPTEMBER 2015.**
  - **THE FUNCTIONS OF GOVERNANCE, I&P, AND PERSONNEL ALL REMAIN UNDER STATE CONTROL.**

**FROM A STATEWIDE PERSPECTIVE, WE CONTINUE TO STREAMLINE THE DISTRICT QSAC CERTIFICATION PROCESS BY ALLOWING MANY HIGH PERFORMING DISTRICTS TO MEET OUR REQUIREMENTS IN ALTERNATIVE WAYS AND, THEREBY, BYPASS MUCH OF THE MORE ONEROUS COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES SO THAT THE DISTRICTS CAN FOCUS MORE ON STUDENT LEARNING.**

**WE CONTINUE TO SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENT OUR TEACHER IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES UNDER ACHIEVENJ AND TEACHNJ. FIRST, EDUCATORS AT ALL LEVELS ARE HAVING MORE CONVERSATIONS ABOUT INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE THAN EVER BEFORE. SECOND, WE ARE NOW RECOGNIZING AND RETAINING OUR HIGHEST PERFORMING TEACHERS AND PROVIDING THEM WITH ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE AS COOPERATING TEACHERS, MENTORS AND TEACHER-LEADERS; SIMILARLY, WE ARE BETTER IDENTIFYING, SUPPORTING, AND, WHERE NECESSARY, REMOVING OUR STRUGGLING TEACHERS. LAST, THROUGH THE INPUT AND INNOVATION IN OUR CLASSROOMS, WE CONTINUE TO EVOLVE THE EVALUATION SYSTEMS TOWARDS THE LOCAL NEEDS OF OUR DISTRICTS, WHILE MAINTAINING THE IMPROVED SUPPORTS, ACCOUNTABILITY AND PROCESSES OUTLINED IN STATUTE.**

**WE ARE ALSO WORKING TO ENSURE ALL NEW TEACHERS ARE BETTER PREPARED FOR THE REALITIES OF THE CLASSROOM ON DAY ONE. THE STATE RECENTLY ADOPTED AND IS NOW IMPLEMENTING A SET OF POLICIES TO ENSURE THAT WE HAVE HIGH QUALITY CANDIDATES IN OUR NEW JERSEY TEACHER PREP PROGRAMS, AND THAT THESE CANDIDATES ARE RECEIVING BETTER AND LONGER CLINICAL TRAINING GROUNDED IN SOUND INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE.**

**ULTIMATELY, WE ARE WELL UNDERWAY TOWARD HELPING ALL EDUCATORS IMPROVE IN THEIR PRACTICE AND ENSURING ALL OUR STUDENTS BENEFIT FROM EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION.**

**WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE LEGISLATURE FOR ITS LEADERSHIP IN THE AREA OF CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION. THE DEPARTMENT IS**

**COMMITTED TO PROVIDING QUALITY CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS THAT CAN BE OFFERED IN VARIOUS SETTINGS. WE ARE ADDRESSING THIS THROUGH A MULTI-PRONG EFFORT:**

- 1) THE LEGISLATURE APPROPRIATED \$3 MILLION FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2015 AND AN ADDITIONAL \$3 MILLION IN FISCAL YEAR 2016 TO OFFER MULTI-YEAR GRANT OPPORTUNITIES TO COUNTY VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS TO EXPAND CTE PROGRAMS UTILIZING EXISTING FACILITIES IN OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS, COUNTY COLLEGES AND OTHER ENTITIES NOT OWNED BY THE COUNTY VOCATIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS. THIS IS PROVIDING ONE MECHANISM TO EXPAND PROGRAMS WITHOUT REQUIRING A SIGNIFICANT INVESTMENT IN BRICK AND MORTAR FACILITIES. WE REALIZE THESE PROGRAMS OFTEN REQUIRE SPECIALIZED FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT AND THIS GRANT PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY TO IMPLEMENT HIGH-QUALITY CTE PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS.**
  
- 2) THE DEPARTMENT ALSO OFFERED A GRANT OPPORTUNITY WITH STATE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AID FUNDS IN THE CURRENT FISCAL YEAR TO BEGIN TO BUILD CAPACITY IN COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOLS TO DEVELOP QUALITY CTE PROGRAMS LEADING TO CAREER PATHWAYS FOR STUDENTS. EIGHT DIVERSE SCHOOL DISTRICTS HAVE BEEN SELECTED AND WILL RECEIVE A GRANT FOR \$100,000/YEAR FOR UP TO FIVE YEARS ALONG WITH INTENSE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TO SUPPORT THIS EFFORT. THIS ALSO INCLUDES A STRONG COLLABORATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN LEVERAGING THEIR RESOURCES TO BUILD HIGH-QUALITY EMPLOYER-DRIVEN PARTNERSHIPS IN THESE DISTRICTS.**
  
- 3) NEW JERSEY IS AMONG 24 STATES AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA THAT SECURED ONE OF THE \$100,000 NEW SKILLS FOR YOUTH GRANTS, WHICH IS PART OF A \$75 MILLION FIVE-YEAR INITIATIVE DEVELOPED BY JPMORGAN CHASE, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS (CCSSO) AND ADVANCE CTE. AFTER USING THE INITIAL GRANT TO PERFORM A DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT OF THEIR CAREER-PREPARATION PROGRAMS, STATES CAN APPLY FOR PHASE TWO OF THE GRANT, WHICH WILL HELP THEM EXECUTE THE ACTION PLANS DEVELOPED IN PHASE ONE. WE PLAN TO USE THE GRANT TO BETTER ALIGN CTE PROGRAMS WITH SEVERAL KEY INDUSTRIES IDENTIFIED BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AS PROVIDING THE GREATEST OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH, SUCH AS HEALTHCARE, BIO/PHARMACEUTICALS, AND ADVANCED MANUFACTURING. THE INITIATIVE WOULD FOCUS ON UNDERSERVED STUDENTS AND COMMUNITIES. ANOTHER KEY ELEMENT WOULD BE**

**TO HELP SCHOOLS IDENTIFY INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS THAT HIGH-SCHOOL STUDENTS COULD WORK TO OBTAIN WHILE INVOLVED IN CTE PROGRAMS.**

**TOGETHER WITH THE STATE EDUCATION ASSOCIATIONS AND THE ANTI-BULLYING TASK FORCE, WE HAVE PROVIDED RECOMMENDATIONS, TRAINING AND RESOURCES TO PROMOTE POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATES AND SUPPORTIVE SCHOOLS HELPING TO REDUCE INCIDENTS OF BULLYING.**

**WE ARE CONTINUING TO PROVIDE ONLINE WEBINARS, IN-PERSON TRAINING, A WEB PAGE OF RESOURCES AND DEVELOPING A BEST PRACTICE MANUAL ON ADDRESSING READING DISABILITIES, INCLUDING DYSLEXIA, IN COLLABORATION WITH STATE READING DISABILITIES EXPERTS AND INSTITUTES OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO ASSIST DISTRICTS WITH IMPLEMENTING STATE LAWS AND IMPROVE READING ACHIEVEMENT.**

**I'M PLEASED TO SAY THAT NEW JERSEY HAS RECEIVED NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR ITS EFFORTS TO SUPPORT GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS WHO WORK WITH ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELLS). ONE RESOURCE, FABRIC, FOCUSES ON SIX LEARNING COMPONENTS FOR ELLS (FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS, ACADEMIC DISCUSSIONS BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE, RESOURCES, INDIVIDUALIZED ASSESSMENT, CULTURE) TO HELP ELLS ACCESS CLASSROOM CONTENT WHILE THEY ACCLIMATE TO AN ENGLISH LEARNING ENVIRONMENT. THIS RESOURCE WAS RECOGNIZED IN THE USDE'S NATIONAL CLEARINGHOUSE FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION (NCELA) NEWS BLAST, AND NJDOE STAFF WILL BE PRESENTING FABRIC AT THE 2016 WIDA NATIONAL CONFERENCE.**

**I COULD GO ON AND ON BUT I THINK YOU GET MY POINT THAT WE ARE PASSIONATE IN OUR COMMITMENT TO TAKE EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING. WE NEED TO PREPARE STUDENTS FOR THE WORLD AND JOBS OF TOMORROW AND WE CAN'T DO THAT BASED ON THE CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION OF YESTERDAY. THIS IS A MORAL AND ETHICAL OBLIGATION THAT WE HAVE AS A SOCIETY.**

**AND WE WILL CONSTANTLY STRIVE TO IMPLEMENT THESE MULTI-YEAR CHANGE PROCESSES BETTER. AS WE DO THIS HARD WORK, OFTEN IN THE FACE OF GREAT ANXIETY AND CONCERN, WE MUST REMEMBER THAT N.J. IS AN ACADEMICALLY HIGH PERFORMING STATE TODAY BECAUSE OF OUR COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT TO CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT STRETCHING BACK TO THE 1980'S. WE STAND ON THE SHOULDERS OF COUNTLESS EDUCATORS AND POLICYMAKERS OVER THOSE YEARS WHO WERE COMMITTED TO PUTTING THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN, ALL CHILDREN, FIRST, AND WHO DID NOT GIVE UP WHEN THE GOING GOT HARD.**



**THERE IS MUCH GOOD TO BE DONE AS WE WORK TOGETHER ON THESE ISSUES. I VALUE YOUR PERSPECTIVE AND LEADERSHIP AND I LOOK FORWARD TO ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS TODAY.**