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August 22, 2017

TO: Chief School Administrators
Charter School and Renaissance School Project Leads
Public and Nonpublic High School Principals
School Counselors

FROM: Kimberley Harrington
Commissioner

SUBJECT: 56th Annual United States Senate Youth Program

The New Jersey Department of Education is pleased to announce its participation in the 56th Annual [United States Senate Youth Program](#) (USSYP) sponsored by the United States Senate and the Hearst Foundations. **Principals of public or nonpublic schools in New Jersey may nominate one outstanding junior or senior** to be considered for this highly competitive, merit-based program. The application deadline is **October 9, 2017**.

Each year, two high school juniors or seniors from each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense schools are selected to participate in an intensive week-long educational program held in Washington, D.C. Participants receive a one-time \$10,000 undergraduate college scholarship. The Hearst Foundations will pay all expenses for Washington Week (March 3-10, 2018), including transportation, hotel and meals. During Washington Week, delegates will hear major policy addresses by senators, cabinet members, officials of the Departments of State and Defense, and directors of federal agencies. Each session with elected officials includes an in-depth question-and-answer period. The Department of Defense will provide specially selected officers to serve as mentors for the student delegates while in Washington, D.C.

The United States Senate Youth Program is designed for students who have demonstrated outstanding leadership abilities in their school and community, and a strong commitment to public service. The type of student who thrives during Washington Week is one who is truly interested in government, history, politics and leadership. The Hearst Foundations seek students who are confident and excel at public speaking, as Washington Week has provided students the opportunity to speak directly with the highest-level elected and appointed officials in the country, including the President of the United States.

To be eligible, students must be serving in an elected or appointed capacity in an approved student government, civic or educational organization, and be a New Jersey resident during the application period through Washington Week.

Students who attend this program are encouraged to pursue coursework in history and political science, as well as careers in public service. Students must be able to confirm proof of citizenship or legal permanent resident status in order to participate in USSYP. Information about USSYP program and scholarship rules may be found on the [USSYP website](#) and in its [brochure](#). Information about New Jersey's selection process may be found on the [NJDOE website](#).

Please note that to ensure consideration of your nominee, **the application packet must be completed and received by mail no later than October 9, 2017**. As described in the [application requirements](#), the application packet includes a completed [application form](#) with the principal's signature, two-page essay, resume, transcript, press paragraph, and a letter of recommendation from the principal and advisor of the leadership organization. A selection panel will choose two delegates and two alternates. Announcement of the two delegates who will represent New Jersey will be made by mid-December, 2017.

Thank you for your assistance with the USSYP nomination process. In the past, the delegates from New Jersey have been extraordinary, and we expect, with your help, to receive many exceptional applications again this year. If you have any questions, contact Beverly Plein, program administrator, at USSYP@doe.state.nj.us.

LM/DG/ BP

c: Members, State Board of Education

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