



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: June 2, 2021
To: Chief School Administrators, Charter School and Renaissance School Project Leads
Route To: Assistant Superintendents of Curriculum and Instruction
From: Lisa J. Gleason, Ed.D., Assistant Commissioner
Division of Academics and Performance
Deadline: Applications for designation are due by November 1, 2021

New Jersey Schools to Watch Information Sessions

The New Jersey Schools to Watch Program[®] (NJSTW) is part of the national initiative in middle grades school improvement sponsored by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform. NJSTW recognizes excellence in middle level education. High-performing schools maximize student growth, support learning for all students, and prepare students for success in high school, college, and careers. The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) is a partner agency in support of this initiative and works in collaboration with the New Jersey Association for Middle Level Education, New Jersey Education Association, Felician University, Kean University, Stockton University and William Paterson University.

NJSTW is designed to help schools take a critical look at the needs of middle grade students, defined as students in grades 5, 6, 7 and 8. Participation in the [NJSTW Program](#)¹ does not require that the school be organized as a stand-alone, traditional middle school. NJSTW is a research-based program that seeks schools that are continuously improving student achievement. It requires schools to engage in significant reflection about how they operate, the vision for their work, and the outcomes of programs and services. Schools that meet specific criteria for academic excellence, developmental responsiveness, social equity, and organizational structures and processes become part of a [state](#) and national network designed to share promising practices and success stories.

Districts interested in learning more about this program and how to apply for designation as a NJSTW can [register](#) for one of the virtual information sessions scheduled on July 15, 2021 and July 22, 2021. All sessions will begin at 3:30 p.m. Applications for designation are due by November 1, 2021. Please visit [NJSTW](#) to learn more about this middle grade school improvement program.

¹The NJSTW website identifies the eligibility criteria for participation in the program.

c: Members, State Board of Education
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NJDOE Staff
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
Garden State Coalition of Schools
NJ LEE Group