



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: June 8, 2023
To: Local Educational Agency Leads
From: Cary Booker, Assistant Commissioner
Division of Early Childhood Services
Deadline: Register for Interest Meeting by June 30, 2023

Invitation to Join the Early Learning Networked Improvement Community (ELNIC) for Mathematics and Literacy

The Early Learning Networked Improvement Community (ELNIC) is grounded in the methods of improvement science. Improvement science is a problem-solving approach centered on continuous inquiry and learning. Beginning in 2018, New Jersey school districts have worked alongside members of the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) to employ theories of improvement to increase teacher efficacy and to improve student achievement in early learning mathematics and literacy. The NJDOE is seeking additional districts to engage in this work for the 2023-2024 school year.

In the 2023-2024 school year, the ELNIC will work towards improving the quality of early mathematics and early literacy instruction (preschool to grade three). The ELNIC will work with interested districts to:

- better understand current research and best practices;
- strengthen teachers' understanding of pedagogical content knowledge and ability to scaffold instruction along children's developmental levels;
- employ instructional routines to assess foundational skills;
- implement evidence-based practices to differentiate instruction; and
- engage in cycles of continuous improvement called the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles.

The ELNIC project provides a platform for teachers in P-3 to be coached by nationally renowned content experts using a method called improvement science which allows teachers to test, implement, and examine changes of instructional practices, that are supported by research, which have shown to be effective with young learners. Cohorts of teachers in participating states engage in professional learning opportunities, in collaboration with experts, to learn about specific practices supporting foundational skills in early literacy and math, test those skills, and receive feedback from the experts. This process, known as inquiry cycles, includes a PDSA component which guides participants through testing change ideas, collecting data, and refining strategies. In addition to teachers, instructional coaches and school administrators are also engaged in the professional learning cycles. This professional learning allows leaders an opportunity to gain a better understanding of how to support teachers to build capacity and culture of improvement.

Joining the ELNIC

NJDOE is currently seeking two to five local educational agency (LEA) participants who are willing to engage in the ELNIC project. To learn more about the scope of this project, and the commitment and roles of LEA teams, please refer to this brief [Informational Video, Project Scope](#), as well as the [CCSSO ELNIC website](#).

We welcome superintendents, or their designee(s), to attend an **ELNIC Interest Meeting (virtual) on any of the following dates: July 10 from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m., and July 13 from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.** After attending the interest meeting, LEA's will be asked to complete an Interest Form. The state team will review each LEA's application.

Please sign up to attend the **2023-2024 ELNIC Interest Meeting** via the [NJDOE Events Page](#) by **June 30, 2023**.

If you need more time or have questions about joining, please reach out to K-3Office@doe.nj.gov.

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