Date:	October 11, 2023
To:	Local Educational Agency Leads, Administrators of Approved Private Schools for Students with Disabilities, Nonpublic School Supervisors
Route To:	Business Administrators, Principals, Directors of Buildings and Grounds, School Safety Specialists, School Administration, School Social Workers, School Psychologists, School Faculty
From:	Jeffrey Gale, Director Office of School Preparedness and Emergency Planning

Cybersecurity Awareness Month

As we enter an era increasingly reliant on technology and digital interactions, it is imperative to remain vigilant and proactive in safeguarding educational institutions from cyber threats. For schools, cyberspace creates a vast wealth of resources to enhance learning environments for students. However, it is important to be aware that malicious cyber actors are targeting schools across the country, with potentially catastrophic impacts on students, their families, teachers, and administrators. Since 2004, the President of the United States and Congress have declared the month of October to be Cybersecurity Awareness Month, a dedicated month for the public and private sectors, including kindergarten through twelfth grade educational institutions to work together to raise awareness about the importance of cybersecurity.

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) continues to collaborate with the New Jersey Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Cell (NJCCIC), Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), and the United States Secret Service to help schools reduce the risks of cyber incidents. Cybersecurity Awareness Month raises awareness about the importance of cybersecurity and ensures that every school, staff member, and student has the resources necessary to stay safe online. This initiative underscores the significance of taking proactive measures to protect sensitive information, enhance digital hygiene, and foster a culture of cybersecurity preparedness. The NJDOE invites active engagement with the following resources to enhance cybersecurity posture, protect sensitive information, and ensure a safe and productive learning environment for students.

- **New Jersey Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Cell:** The NJCCIC has a repository of resources that provide alerts and advisories on the latest threats, best practices, and awareness materials ensuring schools remain informed and prepared.
- **Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency:** CISA, a federal agency dedicated to enhancing the security and resilience of our nation's critical infrastructure, provides cybersecurity resources covering a wide range of topics, from basic cybersecurity awareness to more advanced threat mitigation strategies.
- **United States Secret Service:** The United States Secret Service's partnership with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children provides knowledge about cyberbullying, online predators, and social media risks to empower the creation of a secure digital environment for all.

If you are interested in hosting a cybersecurity presentation, please complete the Training and Technical Assistance Form.

Additional questions can be directed to the Office of School Preparedness and Emergency Planning at school.security@doe.nj.gov or (609) 376-3574.

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