



For Immediate Release

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NJ Department of Education Hosts Annual Early Childhood Education Virtual Conference

Trenton, NJ – The New Jersey Department of Education will host its annual early learning virtual conference, “Charting the Road to High-Quality Early Childhood Education,” on Wednesday, March 24, 2021. Now in its third year, this collaboration provides an innovative virtual platform to bring collegial insights and best practices to New Jersey educators and state early childhood programs.

“We are pleased to offer this conference highlighting some of the best practices implemented for New Jersey’s youngest learners,” said Acting Education Commissioner Dr. Angelica Allen-McMillan. “This conference focuses not only on preschool but also on creating strong transitions in the early grades. These strong connections between each step of the educational process help us strengthen our efforts so we can improve outcomes for our youngest learners.”

Workshop sessions will consist of presentations from the New Jersey Department of Education Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) staff who partner with school districts to share information and program best practices on topics including early childhood leadership and fiscal management, supporting English language learners, enhancing social-emotional learning during remote instruction, differentiated instruction in early learning math, and fostering parent engagement. After each workshop participants will have an opportunity to join a live debriefing session to continue discussion on the topic.

“Throughout the last year of unprecedented shifts and pivots across the education landscape, our dedication to providing high-quality early learning opportunities has remained steady,” said Cary A. Booker, Assistant Commissioner of Early Childhood Education. “Our virtual conference is one example of how we continuously renew and refresh our commitment to quality early education.”

Governor Murphy has made high-quality preschool a hallmark of his Administration. His proposed Fiscal Year 2022 state budget includes nearly \$50 million in additional preschool funding, consisting of \$24 million for existing programs and \$26 million to expand access to high-quality programs in more school districts. In total, the Governor’s FY 2022 spending plan would allocate more than \$924 million for preschool next school year.

The virtual conference will include Dr. W. Steven Barnett, who will deliver the conference keynote address. Dr. Barnett is a Board of Governors Professor of Education and Founding Co-Director of the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) at Rutgers University. His research has covered many aspects of early childhood education policy for children from birth to age 5, including curriculum, intensity and duration, class size, age of start, and dual-language immersion.

For more information and to register for the virtual conference, visit the banner on the [NJDOE website](#).

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