



State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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CHRIS CHRISTIE
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO
Lt. Governor

DAVID C. HESPE
Acting Commissioner

May 20, 2014

TO: Chief School Administrators
Charter School Lead Persons
School Business Administrators
Nonpublic School Administrators

FROM: Evo Popoff
Assistant Commissioner

RE: Regional Broadband Purchasing Cooperatives

As schools and districts work to improve their technology infrastructure within their existing budgets, the department has identified a potential cost savings opportunity in regional broadband purchasing cooperatives. As part of the Department's Digital Readiness for Learning and Assessment Project's Broadband Initiative, over 500 business administrators, technology coordinators and school representatives have attended informational meetings since February to learn more about how the cooperative purchase of Internet access can save money for schools. If your school has not yet attended an informational session, please see the below list of additional webinars/meetings in late May/early June.

The goal of the Broadband Initiative is to help LEAs, schools and nonpublic schools achieve significant gains in Internet capabilities to support emerging applications important to student academic achievement. The Broadband Initiative team has reviewed service and pricing information from leading telecommunications companies and has analyzed data from thousands of schools. Based on this work, a statewide procurement opportunity for wide area networks and Internet access will be released in July 2014, which will aggregate the purchasing power of hundreds of LEAs and schools and provide new services beginning July 2015 through the creation of regional broadband purchasing cooperatives. NJDOE is excited to be supporting the Middlesex Regional Educational Services Commission, Bergen County Technical Schools and the Educational Information and Resource Center, who are creating and implementing these regional cooperatives.

Any LEA, school or nonpublic school may participate in the purchasing cooperative initiative. Please follow the steps laid out below if your LEA or school wishes to take part.

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1. *Get familiar with the process.* Additional informational meetings have been scheduled to discuss the upcoming procurement before final commitments are due in June. Meetings will be via webinar or in-person at one of three locations, Middlesex Regional Educational Services Commission (MRESC), Bergen County Technical Schools (BCTC) and Educational Information and Resource Center (EIRC). If you cannot make one of the webinars or meetings, a recorded webinar will be available after June 4 at http://njdigitallearning.org/nj_digital_learning_portal_library/broadband-consortia-project/. To register for a webinar or a meeting, simply click on the appropriate link below and use password “broadband” for each meeting:

Date	Time	Location
May 28, 2014	1:00 PM – 3:00 PM	Via Recorded Webinar click to register
May 30, 2014	10:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Via Recorded Webinar click to register
June 4, 2014	9:30 AM – 11:30 AM	MRESC - 1660 Stelton Rd, Piscataway, NJ 08854 click to register
June 4, 2014	12:30 PM – 2:30 PM	MRESC - 1660 Stelton Rd, Piscataway, NJ 08854 click to register
June 5, 2014	9:30 AM – 11:30 AM	BCTS - 200 Hackensack Ave, Hackensack, NJ 07601 click to register
June 5, 2014	12:30 PM – 2:30 PM	BCTS - 200 Hackensack Ave, Hackensack, NJ 07601 click to register
June 6, 2014	9:30 AM – 11:30 AM	EIRC - 107 Gilbreth Parkway, Ste. 200, Mullica Hill, NJ 08062 click to register
June 6, 2014	12:30 PM – 2:30 PM	EIRC - 107 Gilbreth Parkway, Ste. 200, Mullica Hill, NJ 08062 click to register
June 11, 2014	9:30 AM – 11:30 AM	MRESC – 1660 Stelton Rd, Piscataway, NJ 08854 click to register
June 11, 2014	12:30 PM – 2:30 PM	MRESC – 1660 Stelton Rd, Piscataway, NJ 08854 click to register

Each organization hosting a Broadband Initiative meeting also operates a website that provides additional information, including customized documents and background materials, for schools by region:

BCTS - <http://drlap.bergen.org>

EIRC - <http://eirctech.org/services/broadband-consortium/>

MRESC -

http://www.mresc.k12.nj.us/pages/Middlesex_Regional/News/DRLAP_Broadband_Component

2. *Return the Letter of Intent.* This letter expresses the interest of a LEA or school in participating in the cooperative procurement. It is non-binding and does not commit a LEA or school to buy anything. It simply grants permission for the Broadband initiative team to include your school in the cooperative.
3. *Submit the Service Order Form.* LEAs and schools must choose the level of service they seek to buy: basic broadband Internet access or wide area network services. Schools selecting wide area network services must choose basic (100 Mbps) or high-speed (1,000 Mbps) and also identify the amount of Internet bandwidth they seek to purchase. In addition, schools may bid their intra-district campus locations as part of the consortium purchase by completing page two of the Service Order Form.

The Letter of Intent and Service Order Form are available for download at http://njdigitallearning.org/nj_digital_learning_portal_library/broadband-consortia-project/ and the regional websites listed above.

Please be advised that, in conjunction with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-8.1 (f) (9), which provides the authority to request a detailed list of efforts to improve administrative efficiency and realize other potential or real cost savings, the department encourages every school district to evaluate on an annual basis whether participation in a regional broadband purchasing cooperative would likely result in lower costs. In an effort to ensure that districts have undertaken such an evaluation, beginning with fiscal year 2015-16, the NJDOE plans to incorporate into the budget software and/or executive county business administrator budget review process an inquiry to ascertain whether or not the LEA has evaluated if participation in one of the New Jersey School Broadband Purchasing Cooperatives is more cost effective than any existing broadband contract(s). Participation in the Broadband Purchasing Cooperative is not required, but consideration of participation is strongly recommended. It is expected that significantly reduced broadband costs will be available for members of the consortia/cooperative as of July 1, 2015, and that such future pricing will be announced beginning November 2014.

For more information and to return completed Letters of Intent and Service Order Forms, please email Digital Readiness for Learning and Assessment Project Broadband Initiative consultant, John Matthews at jmatthews@dellicker.com or call 717-491-2936.

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c: Members, State Board of Education
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 District Test Coordinators
 District PARCC IT Contacts
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