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New Jersey STEM Leaders Present in China with Kean University

Chatham, N.J.- Leaders from the New Jersey STEM Pathways Network (NJSPN) and several New Jersey STEM ecosystems recently gave presentations on their innovative STEM education practices in Zhejiang, China as part of a delegation assembled by Kean University. Nearly 400 Chinese officials and representatives and Kean administrators and staff, including President of Kean University Dr. Dawood Farahi, attended the presentations at the Zhejiang – New Jersey STEM Innovation Education Forum on June 1st which also launched a sister school program focused on promising practices in K-12 science, technology, engineering and mathematics, or STEM, education.

With its main campus located in Union, New Jersey, Kean University also maintains a Chinese campus in the City of Wenzhou, located in the Zhejiang province on the country's southeast coast. Dean Keith Bostian of the New Jersey Center of Science, Technology and Mathematics at Kean University oversaw the stateside operations of the June 1st Zhejiang – New Jersey STEM Innovation Education Forum. Bostian invited a New Jersey delegation of STEM leaders which included NJSPN manager Kim Case, who also serves as Executive Director of the Research & Development Council of New Jersey, as well as several of the New Jersey STEM Learning Ecosystems leaders, including: Delran Public Schools K-12 Supervisor Erica DeMichele (Delran STEM Ecosystem Alliance), Flemington-Raritan School Principal Karen Grubak (Hunterdon, Somerset, Mercer Tri-County Ecosystem "HSMC"), and Jersey City Public School Principal Dr. Martha Oseyaw (Liberty STEM Ecosystem).

"The Kean University leadership has seen the potential for collaboration in STEM with New Jersey K-12 leaders for some time now, so it was very exciting to see this come to realization," said Bostian. "I am excited to continue to work with the New Jersey STEM Pathways Network and its ecosystems on the sister school program and see how we can benefit from this collaboration in the years to come."

"We were truly honored that Kean University invited the NJSPN and the ecosystems to support its global reach in Wenzhou, said Kim Case. "We were able to share with the Wenzhou-Kean University STEM Summit attendees the importance of developing a network that connects STEM stakeholders at the state-level and supports STEM learning outcomes being driven at the grassroots level by our ecosystems.

Case, along with DeMichele and Grubak, presented on the concept of a STEM network and the learning ecosystems. Both DeMichele and Grubak were excited to share their work and be part of the delegation. DeMichele said "Delran STEM Learning Ecosystem is improving student STEM learning,



supporting innovative teaching, and increasing parent engagement in our district and I was ecstatic to share what we have learned in this four-year ecosystem journey, especially with the people of Wenzhou.”

“HSMC is very new to the NJSPN and its ecosystems having only started in April 2019, but I was happy to represent our ecosystem, share our vision, and learn from both my ecosystem peers as well as the Wenzhou education representatives,” said Grubak, Principal of Barley Sheaf Elementary School in Flemington.

Dr. Oseyiaw, Alexander Sullivan School Principal in Jersey City also provided a short presentation entitled, “Building a K-12 STEM Lab: A Step-by-step Guide for School Leaders.” Oseyiaw’s presentation was well-received. “While sharing best practices is integral to the work of educators, I couldn’t have predicted that this would take me all the way to Wenzhou,” said Oseyiaw. “I am proud to connect Jersey City’s STEM work to the Hudson County Liberty STEM Ecosystem and grateful to have been part of Kean University’s delegation to China.

Aside from the NJSPN and its ecosystems, several other New Jersey school district leaders attended the Zhejiang – New Jersey STEM Innovation Education Forum to commit to the newly formed “Zhejiang Sister School Cooperation Program,” a partnership between Zhejiang Provincial Department of Education, in Hangzhou, China, Wenzhou-Kean University, in Wenzhou, China, and Kean University, in Union, New Jersey. All of the previously mentioned ecosystems have also committed to the sister school program which will continue into the 2019-2020 school year. Like other international sister school programs, this program will promote intercultural understanding, but will also have a particular focus on STEM education. The Chinese sister schools will visit New Jersey as a continuation of this program this fall.

More information on the Zhejiang – New Jersey STEM Innovation Education Forum will be shared at the next NJSPN Quarterly Meeting which will be held on the morning of June 27, 2019 at Delran High School in Burlington County. The meeting will also highlight the New Jersey STEM Month honorees and provide updates from the NJSPN priority groups which focus on computer science, early learning, teacher recruitment and training, and workforce development. To register for this meeting, go to: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/new-jersey-stem-pathways-quarterly-meeting-june-2019-tickets-60261963154>.

The NJSPN was created in 2014 and is managed by the non-profit professional organization, the Research & Development Council of New Jersey. It includes over 500 STEM leaders from across the state and connects all STEM stakeholders-K-12, higher education, non-profit, informal providers, business, philanthropists and government. NJSPN launched four STEM learning ecosystems in 2017 as part of an international network of now 84 ecosystems supported by the STEM Funders’ Network. This past April, a fifth ecosystem was created in Central New Jersey: the Hunterdon, Somerset and Mercer Tri-County ecosystem. Each ecosystem has developed its own mission, vision, goals, and outcomes and includes STEM stakeholders from schools, businesses, libraries, science centers and museums, higher education, parents, and community members. You can learn more about the New Jersey STEM Pathways Network and New Jersey’s STEM Ecosystems by visiting www.njstempathways.org