FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: Kim Case
973.274.8333 or kcase@rdnj.org

New Jersey STEM Pathways Network Celebrates STEM Leaders and the End of the Year

Honorees included PSEG, Leap into Science collaboration, computer science advocate and teacher Daryl Detrick, student and civic leader Rishabh Rout, and
Toms River teacher Christine Girtain

Delran, N.J.- On June 27, 2019, the New Jersey STEM Pathways Network (NJSPN) hosted its end of the year celebration and final quarterly meeting at Delran High School in Burlington County. The meeting highlighted the New Jersey STEM Month honorees and provided attendees with updates on all the recent events, trips, and work the NJSPN community has participated in.

NJSPN Manager and Executive Director of the Research & Development Council of New Jersey, Kim Case, kicked off the meeting by providing a short recap of what the NJSPN has been up to in the last quarter, including highlighting its recently launched New Jersey STEM Data Dashboard. Leaders from the NJSPN and several New Jersey STEM ecosystems then shared their experience from their recent trip to Wenzhou, China where they presented on their innovative STEM education practices 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. Among others who attended were Kim Case and 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 Osei-Yaw (Liberty STEM Ecosystem).

"The trip to China was such a unique experience," said Case. "We were honored to support Kean University's global reach by sharing the STEM work and ecosystem structure that we have set in place in New Jersey."

Followed by the updates, were the recognition of the NJ STEM Month honorees. These individuals and organizations were each awarded a plaque that featured the 2019 NJ STEM Month logo and provided presentations on their work in STEM. The honorees were as follows: **STEM Corporate Partner of the Year was awarded to PSEG**. This award goes to an employer that has demonstrated a deep commitment to supporting New Jersey's STEM economy through education and/workforce initiatives. **STEM Collaboration of the Year was awarded to New Jersey Makers Day, New Jersey State Library, and Newark Museum for its collaboration for the Leap into Science initiative**. This award celebrates the individuals and/or organizations moving beyond silos to create a more connected New Jersey. To qualify, submissions must exhibit

collaborations between three or more individuals or organizations; **STEM Advocate of the year was awarded to Daryl Detrick, a Computer Science Teacher at Warren Hills High School**. This honor highlights an organization or individual who most effectively communicates the importance of STEM to New Jersey and its citizens; **STEM Civic Leadership was awarded to Rishabh Rout, Edison high school student and Founder and President of WeMake 4H**. This award is given to an organization or individual who demonstrates extraordinary civic leadership in STEM in their community; **STEM Educator of the Year was awarded to Christine Girtain, Director of Authentic Science Research at Toms River High School (North & South)**. This award is given to an individual or organization that has dedicated their time and energy to successfully improving STEM learning outcomes for students in New Jersey.

"STEM is fundamental to PSEG's work and building thriving communities—that is why we invest in its future," said Maria Spina, PSEG Foundation Program Manager. "We're proud to have partnered with NJSPN on its recently launched NJ STEM Data Dashboard, as well as support several of the New Jersey STEM ecosystems, as these initiatives deliver strong support for education and community development. Thank you to the NJSPN for this recognition."

In addition to the honorees, NJSPN leadership also thanked the priority group leaders who dedicated both expertise and time in achieving the NJSPN's goals:
Computer Science: Tunde Onitiri, Camden Dream Center and Deidre Richardson, NJ Department of Education
Early Learning Priority: Pavithra Lakshminarayan, Creator & Chief of Mindbytyes
Teacher Recruitment and Training: Patricia Smeyers, 5th Grade Teacher, Secaucus School District
Workforce Development: Elaine Zundl, Research Director at the Center for Women & Work

The conference included a bittersweet note as Case thanked Brian Carter of the Overdeck Family Foundation for all his contributions to the NJSPN and the early learning priority group. Dr. Carter is returning to the classroom and has accepted a position in his home state of Georgia as a Chemistry teacher. He had been working with the Overdeck Family Foundation for four years as a program officer.

The NJSPN will host its next meeting in the fall, on September 12, 2019. For more information, please visit www.njstempathways.org.

***

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