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The Newark STEAM Coalition was selected to join transformative New Jersey STEM learning initiative

National Organization to Work with Four New Jersey Communities to Improve STEM Education for Children in K-12 Schools

STEM Pathways Network, Overdeck Foundation Lead Effort to Improve Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Opportunities for Thousands of Students

West Windsor, Sept. 29, 2016 -- Four communities in New Jersey were chosen today to participate in a national campaign to reimagine the delivery of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education for children in grades K-12.

Jobs in STEM are the jobs of the future. Labor forecasts predict more than 200,000 New Jersey jobs in STEM fields must be filled by 2025. To begin to meet the need, the New Jersey STEM Pathways Network chose four communities to work with a national organization that will show them how to provide the STEM education and experiences students need to succeed in college, career, and life.

"I am excited to see this level of collaboration among our New Jersey educators, entrepreneurs, businesses and industries," said Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno, who addressed the group at the Mercer County College Conference Center this afternoon. "We know we must improve STEM education opportunities in our State. We are not where we need to be, and we have to work together to make sure that our children are prepared to compete in the world's economy."

The STEM Pathways Network started in early 2015 when Secretary of Higher Education Rochelle Hendricks brought together a group of educators, entrepreneurs and industry leaders to suggest ways to improve K-12 STEM education.

The Network is chaired by Laura Overdeck, Founder and President of Bedtime Math and Chair of the Overdeck Family Foundation. She cited the importance of having organizations with long, successful histories of working with children.

“We are excited to announce the launch of four New Jersey STEM Learning Ecosystems across our State. This White House-backed national initiative connects STEM resources within and across local districts, so K-12 schools, after-school programs, universities, museums and other learning centers, and corporations can work together to build and reinforce our students’ STEM and 21st Century skills,” said Overdeck.

The Teaching Institute for Excellence in STEM (TIES), a growing national organization which is already managing 37 STEM projects to benefit children in areas around the nation as diverse as California, Ohio, and North Carolina, received a \$300,000 grant from the Overdeck Foundation to get the New Jersey project off the ground. Key to the idea is that each “community” is an integrated ecosystem, where schools, colleges, businesses and educators work together with students and parents to prepare for the STEM jobs that will drive the economy in the future.

Secretary Hendricks praised Overdeck’s leadership of the Network and emphasized the value of having a national group guide the campaign.

“We had an impressive pool of 11 applicants, and I am very pleased with the ideas and level of innovation shown by the four communities who will be working with the national group,” said Secretary Hendricks. “Having TIES guide the project will make all the difference in how quickly we achieve success.”

“Newark Thrives! is extremely excited to collaborate with such an innovative learning community. We look forward to launching the Newark STEAM COALITION as a robust STEAM ecosystem, coordinating and aligning Newark’s STEAM rich cross-sector resources for the benefit of Newark residents,” said Traymanesha Moore, Executive Director, Newark Thrives!

The Newark STEAM Coalition will create a resource-rich ecosystem to prepare Newark PreK-16 students, and the Essex County community, to fully participate in a 21st Century STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) workforce. The Coalition’s goal is to develop Newark’s future STEAM workforce by closing education, access and opportunity gaps through collaborations among businesses, institutions of higher education, school district leadership, youth service providers, science and cultural institutions, and workforce development agencies. We aim to align STEAM education with New Jersey’s projected economic growth.

The Newark STEAM COALITION Partners include: The City of Newark, Newark Public Schools, Students 2 Science, The Newark Museum, Afterschool Allstars Newark, New Jersey Institute of Technology, Rutgers University-Newark, The Victoria Foundation, The Prudential Foundation, The PSEG Foundation, Newark Arts Education Roundtable, NJSACC: The Statewide Network for New Jersey’s Afterschool Communities, and Newark Thrives!

To Learn more about the New Jersey STEM Learning Ecosystems Initiative, please visit: www.njstemlearningecosystems.org

To learn more about the National STEM Funders Network STEM Learning Ecosystems Initiative, please visit: www.stemecosystems.org