

STEM Education Month: October 2009

During the month of October you will be highlighting the creation of the new STEM Education Coordinating Council and the importance of this sector to students, the state's workforce, and the economy. This month you are introduced to the public, business sector, and STEM advocates as the Patrick-Murray Administration's point person on STEM related issues. A series of statewide events have been proposed to highlight the new Council and the level of importance you have placed on the aggressive need for improvements in the STEM sectors.

This month long tour has multiple purposes. They are:

- To increase public awareness on how critical STEM issues and how the administration is bringing together leaders and advocates in the field in response to calls for action.
- To make people aware that STEM is the comprehensive component that ties together many of the leading industries which make up the Massachusetts economy: IT, Life Sciences, Manufacturing, Engineering, etc.
- To highlight the large inventory of STEM programs and organizations in the Commonwealth available to students, workers, and residents.
- To highlight facilities, higher education centers, and organizations' based in Massachusetts that are known worldwide for their research and STEM related successes. For example, MIT, Harvard, and the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution.
- To promote your role as chairman of the Governor's STEM Education Coordinating Council and the administration's high level point person on STEM issues.

In addition the creation of the STEM Council and the renewed focus on these issues will hopefully better position Massachusetts for federal funding.

Council and Goals

Currently STEM activities in the state are disorganized and not functioning in ways that fully support the agenda and goals of the Patrick-Murray Administration. Many in the public and private sectors have realized this, and have called for higher-level leadership and better coordination of STEM activities to successfully implement a comprehensive STEM agenda statewide.

This creation of this Council is a response to a call to action from those in the business community. The Council would further establish the administration's leadership on STEM and become a vehicle for advocates from the public and private sectors, as well as legislators, to engage in meaningful collaborations with the executive branch at the highest levels. The goals of the Coordinating Council would be direct and achievable, even during challenging budget times.

The Council shall serve as the central coordinating entity to bring together all of the participants and parties from the public and private sector involved with STEM planning and programming; work to dramatically increase student interest in, and preparation for, careers in STEM by increasing the number of STEM programs in schools in Massachusetts; create and disseminate a statewide STEM Plan which will clearly establish the goals and objectives of the Commonwealth's efforts for the next five years; and launch a campaign to build public support and help parents, students, employees and community leaders understand why the STEM disciplines are so important to individual success.

The full Council will meet at least quarterly and will assign members to create subcommittees to break down the silos and make recommendations on improvements.