
Regional \$1.5M program to new STEM model

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College (HCC), Westfield State University and Springfield Public Schools comprise one of the three regional partnership teams that will leverage a \$1.5 million award from the National Science Foundation to develop MassTeach, a new model for increasing and diversifying the ranks of educators who are prepared to teach science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) in high-need school districts.

The three schools were selected as a pilot group for MassTeach in Western Massachusetts because of their history of collaboration and commitment to STEM education. The partnership among the institutions will be coordinated during

recruitment, through the STEM major, licensure requirements, and early career assistance. MassTeach scholars will be well-prepared and supported as early career STEM teachers.

Community colleges will recruit potential candidates for entry into the program beginning in fall 2018. Many of the candidates are expected to come from existing STEM Starter Academy programs, which give high school students a chance to take STEM college classes and learn more about STEM careers. The goal of MassTeach will be to expand to students at all 15 community colleges and nine state universities in the Commonwealth within three years, eventually placing 50 new teachers in

STEM classrooms with 50 more teacher candidates in the post-secondary pipeline.

It is hoped that MassTeach will serve as a new national model for recruiting, training and retaining STEM educators.

HCC Math Professor Ileana Vasu, coordinator of HCC's STEM program explained, "While Massachusetts is a national leader in K-12 education, there is a sense of urgency to recruit and diversify the STEM teacher pools, and in particular to serve our Latino and black students. MassTeach is predicated on the belief that decreasing diversity gaps by recruiting teachers from community colleges like HCC will improve underrepresented minority student achievement."