



Global Learning Charter Public School

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For Immediate Release: September 16, 2011
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New STEM Education Initiative between the Global Learning Charter Public School, the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, and the Ocean Explorium

Global Learning Charter Public School (GLCPS), the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth (UMD), and the Ocean Explorium at New Bedford Seaport (OE) are pleased to announce the next phase of what will become a more comprehensive and long-range partnership. The intent of this joint venture is to increase the number of students who access and continue to pursue science, technology, engineering and mathematics – STEM – fields in high school, higher education and the workforce. To this end, the partners are launching an innovative formal and informal STEM education and history experience for GLCPS high school students that will expose them to the world-class technology and scientific talent of the University and the Ocean Explorium.

This distinctive project has been developed, in part, in response to the globalization of our economy, rapidly changing technology, and growing workforce demands of our region. The city of New Bedford's 2020 Masterplan underscores this point; one key priority is expansion of recent successes in emerging technology sectors, such as alternative energy, marine science and technology, and biotech manufacturing. Chancellor Jean F. MacCormack stated, "In order to build a regional workforce for these promising fields, the University, GLCPS and the OE believe that students must be excited about science and technology. They must be able to see how their learning and discovery in the classroom makes a difference for the future. This three-way partnership creates an innovative learning experience that will be truly effective. The University loves the idea of bringing science downtown to join our arts effort at the Star Store."

The project, which officially began on September 6th, 2011, includes two high school-level STEM academic programs: an integrated marine science and physics course for all GLCPS high school freshman, and an AP Environmental Science elective for upperclassmen. "Since our school's inception, we have believed in and engaged in authentic collaborative efforts to promote challenging project-based learning experiences for our students. It's thrilling to see this concept realized at an entirely new level," remarked GLCPS science teacher Steve Vaitses.

The courses will be held at new satellite classrooms at the Ocean Explorium where GLCPS teachers and students will have access to researchers and scholars from both the University and the OE, and where they can leverage the substantial scientific and professional resources available directly through the science education center. Mark Smith, Executive Director of the Ocean Explorium, commented, "It is tremendously exciting to see this next phase in STEM education emerge in New Bedford through such a

powerful informal-formal learning model. Through this cross-agency effort, we are creating a learning environment of compelling power and effectiveness – engaging the senses and the mind in real world science.”

In addition, high school freshman will take US History at the OE site, which will be integrated with their STEM course activities and capitalize on the assets of the Explorium, the city and the waterfront. Through a new honors world history course, upper level students will examine global human and natural resources related to seaports and the implications on our society and our local region. GLCPS Social Studies Department Head and teacher, Heidi Eastman, shared, “this historical context, especially of New Bedford – is fundamental to understanding the STEM scope of study. Our satellite venue gives our high school students an opportunity to engage with scientists, historians, artists, writers and world class educators to experience authentic learning within this historic American city and its environs...and beyond!”

Dr. Stephen Furtado, GLCPS Executive Director, iterated several core outcomes of the partnership which include: 1) improving high school academic achievement in physics, chemistry, mathematics, engineering technology, earth science, environmental science, and biology; 2) increasing educational attainment, including high school completion and enrollment in post-secondary education; 3) fostering student interest in STEM majors in higher education; and 4) supporting economic growth for the region. He concluded, “This is a ground-breaking opportunity to bring together a university, science education center and school to provide our students with exemplary hands-on college preparatory academic experiences taught by experts in the field.”

"With all of the challenges we face in education today, this collaboration serves as a sterling example of how cooperation – and placing positive student opportunities and outcomes top of mind – results in a venture that is beneficial to all concerned. The Board of Trustees of the Global Learning Charter Public School continues – in our tenth year of service – to meet the needs of our community head on...and without reservation.", said David Biggs, Vice Chairman of the Board.

Open to New Bedford residents, GLCPS is a tuition-free public charter school that serves students in grades 5-12. GLCPS offers a small, personalized, and challenging college preparatory learning environment in which students are encouraged to realize their full potential, both academically and personally.

For more information about Global Learning Charter Public School visit www.glcps.org
For more information about the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth visit: www.umassd.edu
For more information about the Ocean Explorium visit: www.oceanexplorium.org