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For Immediate Release

Phoenix Metro Tech High School Wins Science And Math Education Grant To Implement First In Arizona Interactive Sustainability Curriculum

Innovative Program to Tie in Hands-On Training for “Green Collar” Jobs

(Phoenix, AZ – November 9, 2009) – Phoenix Union District’s Metro Tech High School will receive a two-year, \$900,000 grant to implement a unique curriculum based on innovation in sustainability careers. The first-of-its kind program will not only provide an opportunity for students at the urban high school to learn the basics of sustainability (recycling, renewable energies, etc.), it will also give them the chance to use what they are learning to engage in interactive planning, development and implementation of “green” projects.

The Math or Science Achievement Grant (MSAG) is funded by the Arizona State Board of Education and awarded by Science Foundation Arizona Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Initiative (SFAZ-STEM). Metro Tech’s winning program, titled “Leading EcoExplorations and Demonstrations of Sustainability” (LEADS) was chosen as a grant recipient because of its emphasis on using math and science in real-life applications that expose students to STEM learning and STEM careers. “Green collar” jobs, or those in sustainable industries and renewable resources, are becoming increasingly important to the nation’s and state’s economy, as the demand and need for renewable and energy efficient services and products grow.

Metro LEADS is in its early stages, and the students are already hard at work, building small, scalable energy efficient structures, including a doghouse constructed of adobe, straw and other repurposed and recycled materials. The doghouse recently won a Desert Doghouse contest, hosted by Arizona State University’s College of Engineering and the Del E. Webb School of Construction, and is being displayed at this week’s national “Greenbuild 2009” conference in Phoenix.

The Metro LEADS program will create a new learning environment that combines career and technical education (CTE), community and family engagement and peer mentoring of younger students enabling participants to take what they learn in school and apply it to current and future real-world situations. Additionally, Metro LEADS students will be required to implement models of sustainability on campus, reducing energy costs and water consumption and increasing recycling efforts through their work. Art and fashion program students will incorporate repurposed and recycled materials into their creations, a water bottle refilling station will be set up on campus and students will conduct energy audits on campus and at home. As the curriculum progresses, students will tackle more challenging assignments that will enable them to build a 21st century skill set, critical for success in the global economy.

(more)

“We are pleased to see Metro Tech implementing this program, which is exactly what these grants were intended to do,” said Jacob Moore, President of the Arizona State Board of Education. “LEADS will expose many students to an invaluable educational experience, and a career path they might not have considered otherwise.”

“The Metro LEADS program will enable students to transition from high school to college, trade school and careers, since it utilizes a hands-on approach to hone the skills necessary for the knowledge-based economy,” said William Harris, President and CEO of Science Foundation Arizona.

Metro Tech is a comprehensive public high school that offers two-year career and technical education (CTE) courses to juniors and seniors. The school serves approximately 1350 full-time students each year, as well as more than 1700 through sister schools. Reach for the Metro LEADS program is estimated to reach more than 7,000 Phoenix-area children (including elementary and middle-school students) over the course of three years.

“These practical approaches will help underscore the importance and bring context to mathematics and science. Students will *experience* these subjects, not just memorize facts,” said Darcy Renfro, executive director of SFAz-STEM. “This is exciting – it will be one of the more hands-on and true learning experiences involving STEM careers in place, and could eventually be emulated at schools across the state.”

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About Science Foundation Arizona: Science Foundation Arizona (SFAz) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization initiated in 2006 by the Greater Phoenix Leadership Inc., Southern Arizona Leadership Council and the Flagstaff Forty with the goal to build and strengthen the scientific and education infrastructure in areas of greatest strategic importance to Arizona’s competitiveness in the global economy. These areas comprise advanced communications, biomedicine and sustainable systems that include renewable energies. The state has appropriated monies through the Arizona 21st Century Competitive Initiative Fund and these grants, totaling \$60 million in the first two years, leveraged an additional \$109.8 million in outside capital. SFAz continues to accelerate Arizona’s students’ competency and excellence in STEM education and has to date impacted 54,000 students statewide. SFAz serves as a facilitating bridge between industry and education that ensures a highly skilled Arizona work force as the foundation for a 21st century knowledge-based, global economy. Founding executive leadership groups are funding operating costs for SFAz through 2012, enabling public and philanthropic funds to be directly applied to foundation initiatives. For more information, visit www.sfaz.org