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100+ High School Seniors Commit to STEM Post Graduation & Students Recognized for STEM Achievements

Massachusetts high school seniors who are pursuing STEM in college are celebrated.
Students in Project Lead The Way courses present to industry professionals.

[Worcester, MA, May 2, 2019] Congratulations to over 100 high school seniors who participated in Mass STEM Hub's STEM Signing Day, committing to studying STEM disciplines after graduating, as well as student teams from Doherty Memorial High School (Worcester), Uxbridge High School, Blackstone Valley Technical High School, and Leominster High School for being selected as winners for their engineering, computer science, and biomedical science projects. STEM Signing Day and High School Student Showcase were organized by [Mass STEM Hub](#) (a program of the One8 Foundation) for [Project Lead The Way](#) (PLTW) students on Thursday May 2, 2019 at Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

"There is really an incredible impact you can make with your skills on peoples' lives," noted Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito who spoke at the event. **"Massachusetts has one of the most innovative economies in the country and in order for it to continue to grow and thrive and create new jobs and opportunities for people [...], we need the talent to drive it. It is talent development that is driving innovation in this economy in Massachusetts."**

Borrowing from the athletics tradition that celebrates student athletes who sign on to play a sport at the collegiate level, STEM Signing Day was an opportunity to celebrate students who are committed to pursuing STEM disciplines after graduating from high school. Over 100 students from 12 high schools across Massachusetts were recognized – more than triple compared to last year's event. These students who participated in rigorous engineering, computer science, and biomedical science PLTW classes during their high school careers are going on to study at academic institutions including Northeastern University, UMass Lowell, Virginia Tech, Wentworth Institute of Technology, and WPI.

"I am thrilled to welcome these Project Lead The Way students to campus for STEM Signing Day, and I'm especially excited that a number of them will be joining the WPI Class of 2023," stated Laurie Leshin, President of Worcester Polytechnic Institute. **"The Project Lead The Way curriculum exposes students to something they'll find very useful in their college careers: the experience of trying something new, possibly failing, learning, and then pivoting and trying again. It's those experiences that make a great learner and a great STEM thinker, and that's what the world needs right now. Congratulations to all the students here, and to Project Lead The Way."**

Mass STEM Hub's High School Student Showcase featured projects by over 300 high school students in PLTW's courses across Massachusetts. In these courses, students engage in applied learning, helping students develop 21st century skills including critical thinking, complex problem-solving, communication, and collaboration - all needed to succeed in today's rapidly changing, tech-infused world.

All of the students received authentic feedback from STEM industry volunteer judges on their projects and presentations, connecting the work they did in the classroom to the work these experts do daily.

“It’s that type of feedback that’s going to help motivate them to stick with it and follow those career paths and therefore find a place where they are qualified to come work for a company like mine,” commented Erin Koser of GE Healthcare.

Over 100 professionals volunteered as judges, from over 40 organizations including Comcast, MassDOT’s Highway Division, Boston Scientific, Cisco, Saint-Gobain, and Wayfair.

“The students are the future. They are so brilliant, very thoughtful, and working really hard on solving problems that we’re facing in everyday life... It was inspiring,” noted Exodia Demosthene, software engineer for Wayfair. **“I definitely see a lot of connection between the work that I’m doing today to how they are solving the problems that they are addressing right now.”**

Judges selected winning projects in four categories, including mastery of concept, best capstone project, presentation skills, and innovation.

The Capstone Excellence Award was awarded to students from Doherty Memorial High School who won this award for their capstone project entitled “The Clawsome Tunnel” – a tunnel featuring innovative grooming technologies for pet cats. Capstone projects were created as part of a PLTW capstone course: Engineering Design & Development or Biomedical Innovation. In these courses, students identified real-world issues and then researched, designed, and tested solutions, using their skills and knowledge gained from previous PLTW courses.

The Showcase Excellence Award was awarded to a group from Uxbridge High School for their mechanical engineering project about engines, which demonstrated the highest overall mastery and understanding of their PLTW non-capstone course work.

The Excellence in Presentation award was awarded to a team from Blackstone Valley Technical High School, who presented a library renovation civil engineering and architecture plan. This team was acknowledged for delivering a clear and concise project overview and showing outstanding knowledge of their topic.

Lastly, students from Leominster High School won the Innovation Award for their remotely operated underwater submarine. This award was given to the team who demonstrated an innovative approach to tackling problem.

“I think there are students who don’t necessarily understand the line from what they are doing now through to postsecondary study, and I think [today] will add some reality to it,” stated Christopher Golembewski, engineering teacher from Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School.

Mass STEM Hub partnered with WPI to create this opportunity for students to present their STEM project work to industry professionals, and celebrate the students who are committing to STEM further.

“Student engagement with industry professionals is hugely impactful,” commented Andreina Parisi-Amon, Director of Partnerships for Mass STEM Hub. **“Receiving feedback from an actual engineer on an engineering project makes their classwork so much more meaningful and approachable. It makes visible and exciting a path from their high school classroom into a STEM career.”**

GE Foundation and National Grid are founding event sponsors of Mass STEM Hub.

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Mass STEM Hub is a program of the One8 Foundation and its mission is to provide schools with access to and support for the next level of STEM education that engages students and prepares them to succeed in a rapidly changing, high tech world. Mass STEM Hub has helped scale Project Lead The Way’s K-12 curriculum in engineering, computer science and biomedical science to over 35,000 students in Massachusetts enabling students to learn how to take theory to practice with real world problem solving. www.mass-stemhub.org

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