



NEWS RELEASE

November 10, 2009

For more information, contact:

Jim Morris, DESE, 573-751-3469

Michael Waltman, DWD, 573-526-8267

David Lankford, MCC, 573-634-3511

Jeremy Kintzel, MDHE, 573-751-2361

Mary Bruton, MERIC, 573-751-3635

New Biomedical Program Flourishing in 13 High Schools

Carthage program to be featured at national symposium Thursday

A tough, new science curriculum is giving some Missouri students an early taste of the rigors and rewards that await those who prepare for biomedical careers. And students say that they relish the challenge.

Thirteen Missouri public high schools have adopted the [Biomedical Sciences program](#) developed by Project Lead The Way, a national not-for-profit that promotes hands-on, problem-based coursework to improve achievement in math and science.

One of those schools, Carthage High School, has earned the honor of showcasing its program this week (Nov. 12) at the national Project Lead The Way Symposium in Austin, Texas. Just seven schools nationwide received this honor.

“The biomedical and health care fields are expected to generate one out of every five new jobs by 2016,” said Commissioner of Education Chris L. Nicastro. “For Missouri to be a leader in the biomedical industry, and for students to be well-prepared for those jobs, our schools need to put greater emphasis on math, science and technology. The Biomedical Sciences program provides a high-quality curriculum that is motivating for students.”

Students in the Biomedical Sciences program apply their skills and knowledge to solve realistic, health-care-related problems, while gaining exposure to various related careers. To be eligible for the program, students also must enroll in college-preparatory math and science classes.

“Career awareness in the biosciences has been a real problem in attracting students to these careers,” said Keith Gary, director of program development at the Kansas City Area Life Sciences Institute. “Project Lead The Way Biomedical provides students exposure to high-wage, high-demand jobs within the biosciences field.”

Response at the schools that have implemented the program has been phenomenal, with several schools seeing enrollment double or even triple. Students and teachers rave about the engaging format.

“It’s such a rich curriculum,” said Ralph Flori, a Project Lead The Way teacher instructor at the Missouri University of Science and Technology. “It’s not teacher-centered; it’s student-centered. The teacher presents a problem, gives some background information and then, as quickly as possible, turns the students loose with an open-ended problem to solve. It asks students to think at a higher level. They quickly respond to that challenge and start relishing it.”

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education oversees Project Lead The Way programs in Missouri. The Biomedical Sciences program began in Missouri in 2007-08 with five pilot schools.

Schools interested in implementing Project Lead The Way can learn how at www.pltw.org. They may also contact Janice Rehak, health occupations supervisor at DESE, at 573-522-5811 or janice.rehak@dese.mo.gov.

The 13 high schools participating in the Project Lead The Way Biomedical Sciences program are:

Blue Springs School District

- Blue Springs Freshman Center
- Blue Springs High School
- Blue Springs South High School

Carthage School District

- Carthage Senior High School

Fort Osage School District

- Fort Osage High School

Hazelwood School District

- Hazelwood Central High School
- Hazelwood East High School
- Hazelwood West High School

Lee’s Summit School District

- Summit Technology Academy

Liberty Public Schools

- Liberty Senior High School

North Kansas City School District

- Winnetonka High School

St. Joseph School District

- LaFayette High School

School District of Clayton

- Clayton High School

###

More information is available at http://dese.mo.gov/divcareered/missouri_connections_news_room.htm.

The Missouri Connections Public Outreach Partnership workgroup represents a collaboration of state agencies concerned with education and workforce development who are helping inform and build awareness among the public, particularly students and potential students, of targeted careers, educational and industry trends, and workforce development priorities. Workgroup members represent the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; Department of Higher Education; Department of Economic Development, Division of Workforce

Development and Missouri Economic Research & Information Center; Missouri Center for Career Education; and Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Freelance writer is Anita Neal Harrison.