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**INNOVATION**

Providence awarded \$500K to 'reimagine' learning

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FLINT, Mich., and PROVIDENCE – Rhode Island’s capital city will receive a three-year, \$500,000 grant from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation to help “reimagine how, when and where Providence’s young people learn.”

The city is one of 10 nationwide selected as New Day for Learning Communities by a Mott Foundation panel of education, after-school and business leaders.

Only two communities – Providence and San Francisco – were selected for New Day grants, but all 10 will receive “tailored technical assistance.” The other cities taking part in the program will be Atlanta; Charleston / North Charleston, S.C.; Chicago; Denver; Flint, Mich.; Omaha, Neb.; Peekskill, N.Y.; and St. Paul, Minn.

“The Mott Foundation is proud to support the efforts in the New Day for Learning Communities as they expand and integrate existing and new efforts to reimagine education and learning to better prepare young people for success,” said program officer An-Me Chung.

The program – based on the “[New Day for Learning](#)” report released in 2007 by the foundation’s Task Force on Time, Learning and Afterschool – lists five “critical elements”: expanding the definition of student success; using research-based knowledge about how students learn; integrating various learning approaches; fostering collaboration; and providing new opportunities for leadership and professional development.

The local award will be shared by the Providence Public School District, the City of Providence and the Providence After School Alliance (PASA), a public-private alliance working to expand and improve after-school opportunities for local youth.

“We are excited and grateful to the Mott Foundation for choosing Providence as one of the first communities to receive funding and the help of national experts to improve the educational outcomes for all of Providence’s young people,” Mayor David N. Cicilline said in a statement today.

The New Day for Learning in Providence will begin by focusing on students in grades 6 through 8. “The City of Providence, school district and after-school community will work



COURTESY THE MOTT FOUNDATION

THE GRANT and technical support will enable the city schools and their partners “to work intensively to create seamless and comprehensive learning environments in select schools – and then bring the best practices to scale,” said Supt. Thomas M. Brady.

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closely to link the school day with the middle school AfterZones, which provide a wide variety of expanded learning opportunities,” the mayor’s office said. “The Mott grant will enable PASA to fund a director of expanded learning time to work [with] the district and build learning connections.”

The program’s financial and technical support “allows Providence Public Schools and all of our partners to work intensively to create seamless and comprehensive learning environments in select schools – and then bring the best practices to scale,” said Schools Supt. Thomas M. Brady.

“Providing innovative, engaging and rigorous learning environments for young people is hard work, and all of us have a vested interest and shared responsibility to seeing it through,” Brady added. “Now is the time for Providence to stand unified behind its young people and complete our vision for education.”

So far this year, the Mott Foundation has approved 23 grants totaling more than \$5.10 million, the nonprofit says on its Web site. Last year, it approved 557 grants totaling nearly \$108.65 million.

New Day for Learning – part of the group’s Pathways out of Poverty program – aims to realize the potential of the nation’s dropouts and “unchallenged youth.”

More than 700,000 of U.S. 20-year-olds are high-school dropouts, the foundation noted. Had just half of that one year’s worth of dropouts “been guided to graduation,” the government would have gained “\$45 billion via extra tax revenue and reduced costs of public health, of crime and justice and [of] welfare payments,” the group said, citing “The Costs and Benefits of an Excellent Education for All of America’s Children,” a research report released in 2007.

“It will take partnerships between schools, communities, students, parents, elected officials, educators, business leaders and others to ensure this vision for America,” said the foundation’s Chung. “Each one of us must play our unique and essential roles in order to improve outcomes for all young people.”

News and information from the City of Providence and the Providence Public School District are available at www.ProvidenceRI.com and www.ProvidenceSchools.org. To learn more about the Providence After School Alliance, founded in 2004 by the City of Providence and the former Education Partnership, visit www.myPASA.org.

The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, founded in 1926, supports efforts to promote a just, equitable and sustainable society. Besides grants in four major areas – Society, Environment, Pathways out of Poverty and organizations active in its hometown of Flint, Mich.– it also offers XSP grants, by invitation only, for various exploratory and special projects. Additional information is available at www.mott.org or NewDayForLearning.org.