



For Immediate Release:  
April 9, 2013

Media Contact:  
Michael Fehrenbach  
(708) 269-0747  
[mfehrenbach@catalystschools.org](mailto:mfehrenbach@catalystschools.org)

## **Catalyst-Maria High School Receives Grant to Implement Nation's Leading STEM Education Curriculum**

**Chicago, IL** - Catalyst Schools announced today that Catalyst-Maria High School is the recipient of a \$55,000 grant from Project Lead The Way (PLTW), the nation's leading provider of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) curriculum. The grant was made possible by a generous donation from the CME Group Foundation.

Funds from the grant will support the implementation of the PLTW engineering curriculum for sixth through twelfth graders, including the purchase of materials and equipment that will be used in the hands-on, project-based classes that are a distinguishing characteristic of PLTW's curriculum.

"Our scholars are African American and Latino, communities that are still underrepresented in engineering and science professions," said Gordon Hannon, Chief Executive Officer of Catalyst Schools, a Chicago-based charter school network founded in 2005. "This grant will give them the skills, the tools, and the opportunity to pursue higher education, and careers, in disciplines such as biomedicine that will improve the quality of life for everyone."

Beginning with the 2013-14 school year, Catalyst-Maria will offer PLTW's Gateway To Technology to sixth through eighth grades, and Pathway To Engineering to ninth through twelfth grades. Both curricula will enable students to immerse themselves in the concepts of engineering, learn and apply the design process, and build strong teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills. Through hands-on, project-based classroom learning, students will apply the skills they've learned in math and science to real-world applications, setting them up for postsecondary and career success. In many cases, Catalyst-Maria High School students will have the opportunity to earn college credit through their PLTW courses.

The PLTW grant application process is highly competitive for schools. To receive a grant, schools went through a rigorous application process, which included demonstrating that the school met specific requirements and eligibility criteria to be awarded grant funds. The requirements included district and community support, teacher professional development, technology acquisitions, a program sustainability plan, and many other factors.

“Project Lead The Way is committed to providing the highest quality STEM education to prepare today’s students for the global economy,” said PLTW President and CEO Vince Bertram. “We were pleased to receive so many quality grant applications, and we look forward to partnering with Catalyst Schools to prepare our nation’s next generation of innovators. Finally, we’d like to thank our generous industry partners who made this grant possible.”

PLTW provides students with a proven path to college and career success in STEM fields through three comprehensive programs: Gateway To Technology for middle school students and Pathway To Engineering and Biomedical Sciences for high school students. The hands-on, project-based curricula show students how what they are learning in math and science class applies to real-world challenges. Each course emphasizes problem solving, critical thinking, and teamwork—the top in-demand skills identified by business and industry leaders for success in the global economy. For more information on Project Lead The Way, visit [pltw.org](http://pltw.org) or contact Jennifer Cahill, PLTW director of communications, at [jcahill@pltw.org](mailto:jcahill@pltw.org).

###

#### **About PLTW**

Project Lead The Way (PLTW) is the leading provider of rigorous and innovative STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) education curricular programs used in schools. As a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, PLTW exists to prepare students for the global economy through its world-class curriculum, high-quality professional development, and an engaged network of educators, students, universities and professionals. PLTW's comprehensive curriculum has been collaboratively designed by PLTW teachers, university educators, engineering and biomedical professionals, and school administrators to promote critical thinking, creativity, innovation and real-world problem solving skills in students. The hands-on, project-based program engages students on multiple levels, exposes them to areas of study that they typically do not pursue, and provides them with a foundation and proven path to college and career success. More than 4,700 schools in all 50 states and the District of Columbia are currently offering PLTW courses to their students. For more information, visit [www.pltw.org](http://www.pltw.org).