MARLBOROUGH — Education chief tours Marlborough science, math classrooms

By Kendall Hatch/Daily News staff
The MetroWest Daily News
Posted Sep 19, 2012 @ 12:14 AM

MARLBOROUGH — The state’s top education official said yesterday that he is impressed with the math- and science-centered academy school Marlborough is rolling out for its students.

“What makes me proud of what’s happening here in Marlborough is that you have a group of educators who have stepped up and said we’re willing to try to do things differently,” state Education Secretary Paul Reville said after wrapping up a tour of three of Marlborough’s Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Early College High School classrooms Tuesday morning.

“One of the things I noticed first when I went into the classrooms was the degree to which the students are really engaged in the work that they are doing,” Reville said. “It captures their imagination. It captures their interest.”

The district just kicked off the second year of the STEM program, which runs like an academy within the school. While the program has an increased focus on science and math, the curriculum calls for larger projects that span across subject areas.

The program started last year in the sixth and ninth grades and has been expanded this year to seventh and 10th grades. The plan for the rollout calls for two grades to be added to the program, with full implementation by the 2014-2015 school year.

The program has just under 400 students, with a heavier enrollment in middle school.

The aim of the project, district officials say, is to not only foster a greater interest in math and science, but also to prepare students for real-world challenges. Much of the work is structured around group problem-solving, a hallmark of business.

The STEM program also has a partnership with Framingham State University, in which beginning next year juniors, and then seniors the following year, will be able to earn up to six college credits before graduating.

Reville yesterday walked through three ninth-grade classrooms - an honors engineering course, an honors algebra course and an intro to physics course.

He said the STEM model builds the skills students need to go on to college and careers through assigning work in a way in which kids can see the fruits of their labor in larger projects.
"That tends to inspire young people and build motivation, and the motivation in turn leads to them building the level of skill and knowledge that they need to be internationally competitive and successful in the world of work," he said.

Bill Rigney, the instructional leadership director heading up the STEM program, said students have responded well.

"After the first year, I was really surprised and happy with how the students responded to the instructional change," he said.

The district has received a planning grant to look into the rollout of the STEM model all the way down to kindergarten, but school officials said last week that the full rollout may have to wait due to budget restrictions.

Copyright 2012 The MetroWest Daily News. Some rights reserved

Comments (2)
WhatsNew
1 day ago
Report Abuse
You must be logged in to report abuse.

Report Abuse

Full rollout, of course, will mean a specific number of students per grade, instead of pulling set number of students to participate - if it's a good model it should be rolled out throughout, how does the model stack up to Advanced Placement classes, which also earn college credits?

cqlinnk
1 day ago
Report Abuse
You must be logged in to report abuse.

Report Abuse

Read the MCAS results just released. All grade composite scores for Marlboro are below state average. Despite their lofty opinions of themselves, it looks like Marlboro teachers and schools are below average. Let's bring this up at next round of contract talks. Maybe they outta take a pay cut to below average pay until they perform.

Login or register to post a comment:
Login
Username:
Password:
Forgot password
Register
Email:
First Name:
Last Name:

I agree to the terms of use
I am over 13 years of age

NOTE: Your inbox must accept emails from "no-reply@gatehousemedia.com"
Register