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CEL F Summer Workshop at Boston Latin School Expands MA Sustainability Curriculum Library

July 17, 2011 Boston, MA: This past week forward-thinking Boston area middle and high school teachers from 17 schools gathered at Boston Latin School, the oldest school in America, to generate curriculum for change. The lessons created will become part of the MA Education for Sustainability (EfS) Campaign: a grass-roots, student-led effort to incorporate sustainability into the Massachusetts school curriculum. The CELF Summer Institute for Sustainability Education (SE) plays a key role in bringing to Boston and the broader Commonwealth region the knowledge and tools necessary to foster environmental literacy and stewardship in our youth.

The Children's Environmental Literacy Foundation (CEL F) facilitated this work at the Boston Latin School. The NY-based non-profit again joined forces with BLS Youth Climate Action Network (BLS Youth CAN) to bring its Summer Institute to Boston and from July 11-13 trained educators to incorporate the 'big ideas' of sustainability, such as understanding that the economy is embedded in the ecosystem or that there is no 'away' when it comes to disposing of waste, into their teaching. SE, also known as Education for Sustainability or EfS, integrates ecological, economic and social perspectives, encourages student inquiry, and promotes positive, community-based action.

One of the most comprehensive programs of its kind, the CELF Summer Institute was established in 2005. Presenters covered topics ranging from the ecological footprint to the carbon economy, sharing tips on using the outdoor classrooms and designing greener products. DURING THE INSTITUTE TIME WAS SPENT DEVELOPING CURRICULUM FOR THE MA EFS CURRICULUM PILOT. Youth CAN students joined the lineup of presenters, as they introduce educators at the Institute to several of the youth group's Education for Sustainability projects that involve the broader community, including their statewide EfS campaign.

Boston Latin School teachers participated with the enthusiastic support of BLS Headmaster Lynne Mooney-Teta, who notes, *"The climate crisis calls for a swift response from the K-12 education system to adequately prepare students for 21st century challenges. BLS is excited to be at the forefront of this movement by piloting the first part of a MA EfS curriculum starting this fall."* Rebecca Park, President of the Boston Latin School Youth CAN, the group who pushed for the EfS pilot, highlights why students are leading the way in promoting sustainability curriculum, *"We are the ones who will be part of a green economy, who will have to change our lifestyles and thinking to avert disastrous effects to the world we live in. There's no better time to start learning how to do that than in school."* BLS Youth CAN faculty advisor Cate Arnold explains, *"Once we have tried and tested the EfS curriculum pilot at BLS, other interested schools will be encouraged to incorporate it, before we push for EfS to be adopted statewide"*.

As a Major Supporter of the Institute, National Grid Foundation was formally recognized on the final day of the Institute by CELF and BLS YouthCAN members. Their support enabled CELF to offer full tuition scholarships for public school teachers from urban districts. Carmen Fields, National Grid Foundation Board Member, shared the Foundation's objective to support environmental literacy and sustainability education programs as she recalled the rich history of Boston Latin School's philosophy of "dissent with responsibility":

"At National Grid Foundation, we believe in the collective responsibility to shape a sustainable future. We are inspired by the young people of BLS Youth CAN whose commitment and passion for sustainability gives us all hope. And through our partnership with BLS Youth CAN and CELF, we enjoy a shared commitment to education and the environment."

The Institute again partnered with Simmons College, through which participants can receive graduate credits upon approval of their curriculum projects.

Guest speakers included Dr. Henry Jacoby, Co-Director of the MIT Joint Program on the Science and Policy of Global Change - a world leader in integration of the natural and social sciences and policy analysis in application to the threat of global climate change. Dr. Jacoby shared analyses of potential anthropogenic climate change and its social and environmental consequences. Also, James Mills, History and Economics teacher from Milton Academy and 2010 Institute participant, presented his approach to Education for Sustainability in his classroom culture and curriculum.

The Children's Environmental Literacy Foundation (CELf) www.celfoundation.org is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization that collaborates with public school districts and individual teachers to raise awareness of sustainable development and to help incorporate related principles into K-12 curricula and programs.

BLS Youth CAN www.blsyouthcan.org is an after school club at the Boston Latin School working in their community and beyond to address the problem of global climate change and promote education for sustainability. BLS Youth CAN maintains multiple community partnerships with youth and adults in support of its numerous initiatives.

PROGRAM QUOTES:

"The 2011 CELf Summer Institute for sustainability education was an amazing opportunity to learn about how to integrate lessons on sustainability into any curriculum. I mentor teachers who are in their first year of teaching in Boston Public Schools and see Education for Sustainability as an important component to 21st Century teaching and learning. I think that all children should be exposed to curriculum that encourages them to think critically about their impact on our world's resources. I would highly recommend the CELf Institute to other educators who are looking for ideas on how to engage their students in inquiry about real life issues."

- Patreka Wood, Boston Public Schools DOE, New Teacher Developer, Summer Institute participant

"As a member of the Executive Committee of MAST (Massachusetts Association of Science Teachers), I wish to thank Katie Ginsberg and Scott Beall for their terrific job organizing and facilitating the CELf Summer Institute. The concepts and connections are relevant across all science disciplines. I look forward to continued collegial work between CELf and our membership through workshops, list serves, and other interconnections. I believe that educating for sustainability is essential for the health of our planet and our communities, and appreciate the professionalism and dedication shown by CELf staff."

- Therese Goulet, MAST Board of Directors, Secretary, Summer Institute participant

"The CELf Summer Institute for Sustainability Education is a testament to the vision and leadership of students; and represents a valuable and timely educational collaboration between students and teachers, as well as non-profit and philanthropic partners. I am confident that these innovative educator trainings will inspire students and provide them with the complex understandings they need to participate effectively in the sustainable solutions we all need"

- Dr. Carol R. Johnson, Boston Public Schools Superintendent

OTHER PROGRAM OUTCOMES:

1. 26 multi-disciplinary EfS lesson plans and curriculum units added to the MA EfS Curriculum Library created at the inaugural program in 2010. All curricula developed is aligned with MA state learning standards and the U.S. Partnership for the Decade of Education for Sustainability National EfS standards.
2. Acknowledgment by Dr. Carol Johnson, Boston Public Schools Superintendent, of value and importance of CELf Summer Institute teacher training and ongoing EfS professional development and curriculum work.
3. Acknowledgment of importance from Boston City Councilor At-Large John Connolly, Chair of Education & Environment Committees for Boston City Council.
4. Acknowledgement of educational value from Terese Goulet, Secretary for Massachusetts Association of Science Teachers.

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