

# REB Connections

NEWS FROM THE METRO NORTH REGIONAL  
EMPLOYMENT BOARD, CAMBRIDGE, MA

SUMMER 2011



## Forging STEM partnerships (in 12 minutes or less)

“It’s a bit like speed-dating,” said REB Vice Chair Antonio de la Serna, eliciting a roar of laughter from the crowd at a recent forum on STEM education. De la Serna, a long-time promoter of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), was explaining the format of the meetings to follow at this two-hour, action-packed event designed to facilitate partnerships between local schools and businesses.

### Bridging education and industry

The Metro North Regional Employment Board hosted the forum, held this past June at the Marriott Hotel in Burlington. The event is one component of the REB’s multi-pronged strategy to engage local students in STEM-related activities, and ultimately contribute to a workforce that is well prepared for the high-tech employment opportunities of today, and the future. The forum provided an opportunity for educators and industry representatives to explore synergies for the purpose of establishing new or expanding current STEM programs for local high school students. Directors of guidance and STEM-related departments from nearly every high school in the Metro North region, as well as representatives from ten local companies — engaged in fields as diverse as green chemistry, aeronautical engineering, construction management, life sciences research and biotechnology — participated in the event. “Our region is replete with cutting-edge businesses in the STEM industries that have developed some very innovative programs, tools and resources. The Metro North REB is fortunate to be in a position to support these companies in extending their reach into our local public school systems,” said REB Executive Director Nancy Brown.

The impressive roster of companies represented at the forum include: Raytheon, Lockheed Martin, AECOM, CDM, Draper Laboratory, Beyond Benign, Massachusetts Biotechnology Education Foundation, Microsoft, Verizon, and Vertex Pharmaceuticals. The company representatives, many of whom who are also members of the Metro North STEM Partnership, discussed their programs in a timed, group format with directors of guidance and STEM-related departments from schools throughout the region. The wide

range of potential activities explored include company tours, job shadowing programs, scholarships, teacher externships, mentorship programs, internships, innovative online tools and national robotics competitions.

### Transforming information into action

REB Consultant Christine Shaw kicked off the meetings with a spirited presentation on the critical need for STEM programming, and provided an overview of the REB's new Metro North STEM Inventory. This new Web-based resource, another component of the REB's STEM strategy, highlights some of the most effective and well-established STEM-related programs in the region. Now available online at: [www.mnreb.org/STEM.php](http://www.mnreb.org/STEM.php), it also includes a STEM Activity Guide, program-focused STEM resources and a section for STEM-related events and announcements. The recent launch of this tool precipitated the forum, as all of the companies represented at the event are also featured in the resource.

### Next Steps

Moving forward, the REB will continue to enhance and promote its online tools, as well as work with the Metro North STEM Partnership to develop innovative solutions to the growing crisis in STEM education in the US. Please check the REB's Web site often for news and updates: [www.mnreb.org](http://www.mnreb.org).

### Program subsidizes summer jobs for local youth

The Metro North cities of Cambridge, Chelsea and Malden are providing meaningful, subsidized employment this summer to over 230 local youth. Funding for the program is being provided by the state through the Commonwealth Corporation, and is being administered by the REB as part of the successful statewide YouthWorks program. To help ensure that the benefits of their experiences extend far beyond their paychecks, the youth are also receiving services to help them develop essential job skills and explore educational and career paths. A follow-up story on the program will be published in the Fall 2011 issue of *REB Connections*.

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### Board elects new chair, vice chair



Joanna Dowling, Chair



Antonio de la Serna, Vice Chair

The REB is pleased to announce that Joanna Dowling of The Custom Group, Inc. and Antonio de la Serna of Draper Laboratory have been elected to the positions of Board Chair and Vice Chair, respectively. Ms. Dowling currently serves as Director of Operations of The Custom Group -- a leading, Massachusetts-based precision manufacturing company, and is also President of The Center for Manufacturing Technology, a member of The Custom Group. She is actively involved with the State of Massachusetts to promote the importance of ensuring the growth and sustainability of manufacturing in the state. As a Board member since 2009, Ms. Dowling has brought to the REB a wealth of expertise in strategic planning, human resources and marketing. "As Chair I am looking forward to working with REB Executive Director Nancy Brown and Vice Chair Antonio de la Serna. I believe the REB can play a pivotal role in helping employers build a stronger workforce and grow new and existing businesses in Massachusetts," Dowling said.

The REB's new Vice-Chair, Antonio de la Serna, is a digital design engineer at Draper Laboratory, an independent, not-for-profit research and engineering organization dedicated to solving problems in the national interest. He is also founder and president of the Greater Boston chapter of the Society of Latino Engineers and Scientists, which performs K-12 educational outreach in both the sciences and engineering.