



Media Contact:

Tracy Shirer ([tshirer@ctsciencecenter.org](mailto:tshirer@ctsciencecenter.org))

O: 860.520.2116, C: 860.817.1373

Connecticut Science Center | 250 Columbus Blvd | Hartford, CT 06103

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Brass City Charter School Pioneers Immersive Science Curriculum with the Connecticut Science Center and the Leever Foundation** *Inquiry-based curriculum strives to be a model for other schools*

**Hartford —November 6, 2014—** The Connecticut Science Center and the new Brass City Charter School in Waterbury have partnered to develop a science curriculum and implement teacher training designed to prepare teachers for challenging new curriculum standards. Thanks to a three-year grant from The Leever Foundation, the program will substantially increase science instruction time and establish a culture of science education and inquiry-based learning at the school. The goal is to create an immersive science curriculum that will be a model for other schools in Waterbury and beyond.

Through research, The Leever Foundation identified the need for teacher training and updated science curriculum, leading to the selection of the Connecticut Science Center as a partner for the pilot program. The two entities worked together for almost a year to craft the program with the Leever Foundation committing a significant \$352,000 to launch the program.

“We are very pleased to support STEM education with a multi-faceted program partnership that addresses specific learning needs and tackles them head on,” noted Andrew Leever, Foundation board member and a key proponent of increasing opportunities for youth to explore STEM subjects. “The impact of the program will have far-reaching implications for science learning and teaching that go beyond the good work being done today at Brass City Charter School.”



Brass City Charter School was established in 2013 with Grades Pre-K to 1 and will add additional grades each year, eventually serving Pre-K through Grade 8.

This summer, Brass City teachers and administrators participated in the Connecticut Science Center’s Mandell Academy for Teachers professional development training, which included a one-week Introduction to Inquiry training, as well as a two-day Science Notebooking workshop.

“We are thrilled and deeply grateful to the Leever Foundation and the Connecticut Science Center for bringing an exceptional science curriculum and pedagogy to our students,” said Barbara Ruggiero, Executive Director of Brass City Charter School. “Brass City Charter School’s mission is to eradicate the achievement gap in Waterbury. This partnership helps us do just that.”

While Brass City educators were honing their skills, Courtney Bauknecht, Connecticut Science Center Education Outreach Coordinator, developed an immersive science curriculum for the school. The new curriculum follows the existing state science standards and also integrates the science and engineering practices from the new Next Generation Science Standards, the inquiry-based learning approach espoused by the Science Center, and materials from the Engineering is Elementary® program developed by the Museum of Science Boston and provided in Connecticut exclusively by the Science Center.



Ms. Bauknecht will teach science classes three days per week at Brass City Charter School throughout the school year as well as provide regular coaching support to the teachers. Biannual Family Science Nights at the school and field trips to the Connecticut Science Center in Hartford will provide numerous opportunities for students and their parents to engage with exciting science programming.

“We are very pleased to be adding Brass City Charter School to our growing network of partner schools across the state. Nurturing student interest and skills in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) has become a national priority,” said Hank Gruner, Connecticut Science Center Vice President of Programs. “This comprehensive initiative generously supported by the Leever Foundation is a truly exciting model for STEM learning.”



Over the next three years, the Connecticut Science Center will deliver ongoing professional development to Brass City educators, and curriculum development and coaching will continue as part of the partnership. The curriculum developed by Ms. Bauknecht this summer covers Pre-K to Grade 2. In the coming summers, Connecticut Science Center staff will develop the Grade 3 to 5 curriculum followed by the curriculum for Grades 6 to 8.

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**About the Connecticut Science Center** The LEED-Gold certified Connecticut Science Center, located in downtown Hartford, sparks creative imagination and an appreciation for science by immersing visitors in fun and educational hands-on, minds-on interactive experiences while maintaining an environmentally conscious presence. Serving 1.7 million people since opening in 2009, the Science Center features more than 165 exhibits in ten galleries and a range of topics, including space and earth sciences, physical sciences, biology, the Connecticut River watershed, alternative energy sources, Connecticut inventors and innovations, a children’s gallery, and much more. Other features include four educational labs, a 200-seat 3D digital theater, function room, gift store, and ongoing events for all ages. The Science Center is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing science education throughout the state of Connecticut and New England, providing learning opportunities for students and adults of all ages, and engaging the community in scientific exploration. The Connecticut Science Center is also the home to the **Joyce D. and Andrew J. Mandell Academy for Teachers**, offering powerful Professional Development for educators. More information: [www.CTScienceCenter.org](http://www.CTScienceCenter.org) or 860.SCIENCE.

**About the Leever Foundation** The Leever Foundation was founded in 1991 by Harold and Ruth Ann Leever. Last year, the Foundation awarded more than \$650,000 in grants and scholarships. The Foundation has been a leader in bringing proven program models to the community including the Osher Lifelong Learning at UCONN-Waterbury, Bravo Waterbury, an el Sistema inspired music and youth development program at Children’s Community and Brass City Charter Schools and the inquiry based science program in partnership with the CT Science Center.