

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Congresswoman Matsui Announces \$5 Million Federal Award to NextEd**

*Funds will be used to evaluate Project Lead the Way, a national engineering program for grades 9-12*

**SACRAMENTO, CA** – Congresswoman Doris Matsui (CA-05) today announced that NextEd (formerly LEED Sacramento) has received a \$5,067,276 grant from the Department of Education’s 2012 Investing in Innovation (i3) competition. The grant will be used to evaluate Project Lead the Way, a nationally used program that offers Engineering as an elective class to high school students, to evaluate Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) pathways for high school students.

“STEM education and investment is critical for the future of American innovation and creative genius in our nation,” said Congresswoman Matsui. “I am pleased that this funding will allow NextEd to work to ensure programs targeted at increasing STEM opportunities for our students, such as Project Lead the Way, are effective and successful. Our country needs more STEM professionals, and these fields open the door to well paying, fulfilling jobs for our students.”

Project Lead the Way is a curriculum developed for high school students that has been implemented in 40 high schools in the Sacramento region. Using the i3 grant and the private matching funds that was a requirement of the grant, NextEd will gather data to determine the validity and success of the program regarding student progress and its effectiveness for advancing students towards success in college STEM classes and careers in STEM fields.

“Developing a pipeline of young people prepared for success in key careers like engineering is a top priority for business and education leaders in the Capital region and across the US,” said Dave Butler, CEO of NextEd. “By validating the effectiveness of the Project Lead The Way curriculum, we can expand its use by school districts across the nation, fulfilling the core objectives of the i3 program – taking effective practices to scale to improve public education and enhance our nation’s economic competitiveness.”

NextEd is a non-profit 501 c3 employer-education partnership serving the greater-Sacramento region. The organization works to advance programs and policies that prepare students for success in the next economy.

Congresswoman Matsui is a member of the Congressional STEM Education Caucus and a strong supporter of STEM education. She has hosted a number of STEM panels at local high schools focused on encouraging students to explore careers in STEM fields. Congresswoman Matsui has also coauthored numerous bills and resolutions aimed at increasing awareness of STEM.

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