



For Immediate Release

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**STEM Preparatory Academy, Middle Tennessee's First "STEM" charter school,
Draws Top Industry Leaders & Over 400 to Its Inaugural Community
Celebration and Admissions Ceremony**

Nashville, Tenn., March 8, 2011 --- STEM Preparatory Academy, Middle Tennessee's first "STEM" charter school, drew top industry leaders in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics ("STEM") and over 400 new students, parents, community activists, and elected officials to its inaugural community celebration and admissions ceremony held at its partner institution, the Adventure Science Center on February 28. Hosted by STEM Prep Academy founder and executive director, Dr. Kristin McGraner, and the school's board of directors, the event recognized STEM Prep Academy's inaugural fifth grade class and offered a compelling message about the power of science and innovation in changing the course of one's life and the world in which we live.

Dr. Samuel Lynch, president and CEO of BioMimetic Therapeutics, Inc., Dr. Craig Ferrell, founder of The Bone and Joint Clinic and orthopedic surgeon to Olympians and professional athletes, and Mr. Stephen "Bubba" Miller, former NFL lineman and president of Arrington Metals, delivered compelling keynote addresses. The unifying message was clear, "...your journey begins now...don't let anything hold you back...and dream big" remarked Dr. Lynch.

STEM Prep Academy is Middle Tennessee's first public charter "STEM" school committed to delivering a college preparatory education for grades five through eight with an integrated curricular focus on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics ("STEM"). Its integrated curriculum that infuses STEM learning and real-world applications in both the STEM fields and entrepreneurship is unprecedented, and Dr. McGraner's deliberate alignment of the academic model to the social and economic development needs of Middle Tennessee is garnering local and national attention from the public charter school sector as well as STEM industries.

Speaker Beth Harwell commented, "Charter schools are succeeding and are proven laboratories of learning and innovation. These schools offer parents options to



provide their children with an invaluable education that encourages them not only to graduate high school, but also to go to college. An educated workforce is vitally important for our state, and charter schools such as STEM Prep will help us achieve that goal."

STEM Prep Academy students and parents will receive an entirely new schooling experience – one in which unbridled imagination, lively dialogue, and authentic problem-solving are the expectations and foundation for achievement.

Dr. McGraner stated, "We are steadfastly committed to two core beliefs that govern everything we do. First, *every* child, regardless of his or her academic or social background, deserves a high quality college preparatory education delivered by highly effective teachers. This is absolutely critical to raising academic achievement and educational attainment. Second, excellent schools are deeply and broadly tied to the communities they serve. It's time we stop divorcing what we do in schools from what's happening every day in our communities, and that includes everything from deliberately addressing the health and safety of our children to ensuring our students are prepared for *and* have equitable access to 21st Century college and career pathways."

The school will open its doors in South Nashville in July 2011 to 100 fifthgrade students, growing a grade each year, and serving 400 students in grades five through eight by 2014. STEM Prep Academy is a free, public charter school serving students who are zoned to persistently low-performing schools and is part of the growing charter school movement supported locally and state-wide.

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