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## Curriculum presented to MVTHS board

### Project Lead The Way pre-engineering program is eligible for grant funding

By TESA CULLI

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MT. VERNON — A new curriculum to support math and create a skilled workforce in engineering was presented to the Mt. Vernon Township High School Board Monday night.

with the support of community members and the Jefferson County Development Corporation.

Project Lead the Way is a nationally acclaimed middle and high school pre-engineering program that is designed to

prepare the future workforce for high tech, high wage jobs according to Richard Greene, of the Bradley University College of Engineering and Technology and coordinator for Engineers For Tomorrow. The curriculum is sponsored in

Illinois by Bradley, the University of Illinois, the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

As a partnership curriculum program, Project Lead the Way

is eligible for grant funding, Greene said.

"It's not often that a program comes before you with a program funding element," Greene told the board.

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Milt

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"Since 2004, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity has provided grants of \$20,000 to \$60,000 to district partnerships and individual schools implementing PLTW," information provided to the board states. "These funds may be used to purchase computers and equipment and to provide additional funding support for teacher training. Since beginning the grants, DCEO has provided a total of \$1,422,000 to 27 grant recipients. Additionally, Gov. Blagojevich is currently investing more than \$1.2 million in PLTW across Illinois, and the Illinois State Board of Education and Education for Employment career systems have provided additional funding related to existing Perkins and career support funding."

Greene emphasized the curriculum is project based and developed to mirror and strengthen math curriculums existing in schools. In addition, PLTW is developed to "light the fire in students and answer the question of 'Why do we have to learn this stuff?'" In addition, the program is designed to encourage female and minority students to pursue science and engineering studies.

As part of the program, the district must have community-based support and business partners.

"The community support this district already has in place is unique, it's remarkable," Greene said.

The JCDC submitted a letter of support for the curriculum.

"The Jefferson County Development Corporation supports the addition of the prestigious and nationally-recognized Project Lead the Way Pre-Engineering curriculum at Mt. Vernon Township High School," the letter states. "We feel this pre-engineering curriculum will challenge students and enrich the learning environment ... We also

believe the Mt. Vernon Township High School Area Vocational Center is one of the most vital programs for our industries and our future. We have complete confidence that this program would be supported and administered with the same degree of professionalism and commitment that has made the current AVC program so successful. This program will add relevance and practical experience to the curriculum which will encourage students to improve performance, improve attendance and raise achievement scores."

MVTHS Superintendent Terry Milt was instructed by the board to pursue information and prepare a recommendation for the board by the October board meeting. The deadline for grant applications for the program is Nov. 9.

In addition to the presentation, the board also adopted revised district goals. The three goals approved are: The district will provide an environment in which each student will achieve his/her maximum potential; the district will be fiscally responsible and move forward toward financial sta-

bility by seeking and allocating resources so that consecutive balanced budgets are achieved in fiscal years 2011 and 2012; and the district will develop interactive communication processes that encourage all community stakeholders to be aware of and participate in district and student activities.

"This gives us the direction, then we can sit down and list how we will achieve and track the progress of goal achievement," MVTHS Board Chairman Dan Hoffman said.

A workshop to discuss the ways the board will achieve the three goals has been set for 6:30 p.m. on Oct. 9.

In other business, the board:

■ Denied a request for students who attend a parent-sponsored class trip to receive excused absences for missed days of school;

■ Approved a contract with cooks, custodians and maintenance employees; and

■ Approved a request to go out for bids for pest management and insurance for worker's compensation, property and casualty.