



Great Schools Partnership  
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## **\$200K Grant Awarded to Four Maine Public Schools** *Innovative partnership will improve math and science instruction*

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**East Grand School**

**Great Schools Partnership**

**Katahdin Middle/High School**

**Northern Maine Community College**

**Region Two School of Applied Technology**

**Southern Aroostook Community School**

PORTLAND, ME: The Maine Department of Education announced last week that it has awarded a three-year, \$200,000 grant to the Southern Aroostook Math and Science Partnership, an innovative effort to improve math and science achievement in the region. The Partnership includes three public schools—East Grand School, Katahdin Middle/High School, and Southern Aroostook Community School—the Region Two School of Applied Technology in Houlton, the mathematics and science faculty of Northern Maine Community College, and the Great Schools Partnership, an experienced school-support organization based in Portland.

All six partners share the belief that math and science instruction in grades 6–12 must be improved to meet the demands of an increasingly knowledge-based, technology-driven global economy. Today’s students need challenging math and science lessons that incorporate hands-on activities, real-world problem solving, inquiry-based lessons, long-term research projects, and new learning technologies. The partner schools are committed to providing equitable learning opportunities in math and science courses, raising academic achievement and aspirations in these disciplines, and preparing every student for success in college. Over the next three years, the partners will work to bridge the disconnect between classroom learning and real-world applications, as well as the gaps in academic expectations that exist between middle school and high school, and high school and college.

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Craig Kesselheim, senior associate with the Great Schools Partnership and project director for the Southern Aroostook Math and Science Partnership said, “It’s exciting to launch this project with such eager and willing participants. The grant will create enriching professional learning opportunities by bringing teachers together with college instructors and outside experts. Our goal is to strengthen science and mathematics instruction so that students learn content knowledge while acquiring real-world skills. The involvement of faculty from Northern Maine Community College will help us create a continuum of learning from the middle grades through college that will enhance the academic success and aspirations of all students in participating schools.”

“NMCC is excited to be partnering with secondary schools in Southern Aroostook on this innovative grant,” said Ron Fitzgerald, chair of the department of arts and sciences at Northern Maine Community College. “The NMCC mathematics and science faculty look forward to sharing our college curriculum with the partner high schools. The more information that high schools have about postsecondary math and science requirements will help them better prepare high school students to be successful at the college level.”

Jon Porter, principal of Southern Aroostook Community School, said, “We have had a great relationship with all of the partners in the past, and this grant will support our efforts at Southern Aroostook to improve instruction and learning, and to incorporate new ideas and strategies in our math and science courses that will prepare our students for college or the workplace.”

“We look forward to creating stronger relationships with the faculty at our partner schools,” said Michael Howard, director of Region Two School of Applied Technology. “Many of our students need additional academic support to successfully transition to college. Creating a closer relationship with our partner schools and sharing classroom activities via distance learning or by other means will better prepare the students in the Southern Aroostook area for the needs of our community in the future.”

Rae Bates, principal of Katahdin Middle and High School, says, “Katahdin is anxious to explore teaching methods in our math curriculum and to see how changes in the Maine *Learning Results* will impact science courses. Katahdin will have Apple laptops for its freshmen next year, and we are looking at ways to integrate technology in these classes. It is always exciting to work collaboratively with other teachers in our region and to learn from each other.”