IBM-Inspired P-TECH Schools Graduate 100 Teens with College Degrees, Tech Career Skills

IBM's innovative grades 9-14 education model expands to 80 schools with 300 industry partners, preparing youth for college and careers

BROOKLYN, N.Y. and CHICAGO, June 1, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- Today, IBM (NYSE: IBM) announced that, by this summer, P-TECH grades 9 to 14 schools in Brooklyn, NY and Chicago, IL are expected to have graduated 100 students since the schools' recent founding.

More than half of these 100 graduates, who will have received both their high school and tech associate degrees, completed the six-year program ahead of schedule. In fact, the on-time completion rate for the flagship Brooklyn school's first cohort is estimated to have been four times greater than the national on-time average for all community college students.

Spurred in part by these kinds of successes, the P-TECH model will grow to 80 schools globally by this fall.

Included among the 100 students who will have graduated from the Brooklyn and Chicago schools since their launch are 34 teens graduating this year from the inaugural P-TECH school in Brooklyn, and 13 from a P-TECH school in Chicago.

As the grades 9-14 education model kicks off its six-year milestone, dozens of soon-to-be graduates from P-TECH Brooklyn attended a celebration hosted by IBM today at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. The students will graduate with their associate degrees from the New York City College of Technology this Monday at a commencement ceremony at Barclays Center.

Meanwhile, Chicago's first P-TECH students, who are accelerating through Sarah E. Goode STEM Academy, recently earned their associate degrees at a commencement held by the City Colleges of Chicago.

P-TECH schools combine high school with a community college degree, coupling strong academic rigor with workplace skills. These public schools largely serve underrepresented youth from low-income families in an open enrollment program. IBM is working closely with educators and businesses to help open at least 20 additional schools this fall, bringing the total number in the U.S. and globally to 80. More than 300 small and large businesses are partnering with P-TECH schools serving thousands of students.

The IBM-inspired P-TECH schools are designed to open new, unconventional pathways to better prepare young people for college and for "New Collar" careers – positions in some of the nation's fastest growing industries where what matters most is having in-demand technology skills. The schools make it easier to cultivate the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) skills that underpin New Collar Jobs.

"P-TECH is proof of what can be achieved," said Stanley S. Litow, President Emeritus of the IBM Foundation and P-TECH Co-Founder. "When given the opportunity, P-TECH's extraordinary youth rise to the challenge and break the mold. Nothing is more critical to our nation's economy than preparing our students with skills to succeed in college and New Collar careers, regardless of their income or zip code. IBM is committed to grow P-TECH across the country."

"Our graduates and young IBM hires show that American STEM talent can be grown, pointing the way to what is possible, with more black and Hispanic students completing high school and college without the need of remediation," said Rashid F. Davis, P-TECH Founding Principal. "Providing equal opportunity to underserved youth in our community is what success looks like. Starting in Brooklyn, this new education paradigm has spread across the country, helping recharge economies. P-TECH's efforts from industry, post-secondary and secondary professionals show that together, we can continue to improve public education."

"We are very proud of our early graduates who are getting both their high school diplomas and associate STEM degrees,"

said Armando Rodriguez, Sarah E. Goode STEM Academy Principal. "This innovative education model equips every student with the 21st century skills to be successful in college and the workplace."

In 2011, the first P-TECH school launched in Brooklyn as a public-private partnership between IBM, the New York City Department of Education, the City University of New York, and the New York City College of Technology (with a degree focus in computer information systems and electromechanical engineering technology). In 2012, Sarah Goode, which builds on the success of P-TECH, opened its doors in Chicago, in partnership with IBM, Richard J. Daley College, and Chicago Public Schools (with a degree focus in web development and networking technology).

Within six years or less, P-TECH students can earn both their high school and two-year college degrees in a STEM field. The academic curriculum is mapped directly to in-demand skills that employers are looking for. P-TECH students are paired with business mentors, gain practical workplace experience with paid internships and workplace visits, and successful graduates are first in line for available jobs.

Some of these graduates will take jobs with IBM, mostly in New Collar positions, in areas ranging from digital design to data analytics, while others will pursue their bachelor's degrees.

The education model has expanded to six states, including New York, Connecticut, Illinois, Maryland, Rhode Island, and Colorado with plans in many of those states for more schools. The model has grown globally with seven schools in Australia and Africa's first two P-TECH schools opening in Morocco this fall.

The economy is expected to create more than 16 million middle-skill job openings by 2024 – positions that require at least some form of education or training beyond high school, according to Anthony Carnevale, Director of the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce. A 2016 report co-authored by Carnevale revealed that 99% of U.S. jobs created (11.5 million jobs out of 11.6 million) since the recession went to workers with at least some college education or training.

IBM, together with many P-TECH schools, the City University of New York, and the State University of New York, created a website (www.ptech.org), making publicly available the formula, case studies, and tools to help school districts, colleges, universities, and businesses establish new P-TECH schools across the nation.

For more information about P-TECH's most recent graduates, please visit the CitizenIBM or ThinkPolicy blogs. Editors can also visit the P-TECH media kit for additional background and illustrative material.

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