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Congressman McNerney visits SLOPE i3 Project Algebra classroom in Antioch Unified School District

Antioch, CA – Congressman Jerry McNerney (D-Stockton) visited Park Middle School in the Antioch Unified School District to see the STEM Learning Opportunities Providing Equity (SLOPE) Investing in Innovation (i3) Project in action in his district this week. The federal [i3 grant program](#) supports innovation in education that is demonstrated to improve student achievement and close achievement gaps, with the goal of identifying and documenting practices that can be shared among school districts nationwide. The SLOPE i3 Project is specifically focused on helping all students succeed in Algebra 1 the first time they take the class, as this is considered critical for college and high-skilled job preparation.

Rep. McNerney visited a SLOPE i3 Project classroom led by participating teacher Mike Moser. He observed the project in action and talked with students about their experiences with the SLOPE approach to learning algebra.

SLOPE i3 Algebra classes use a combination of project-based learning, college and career curriculum, and coaching to support teachers in this style of engaging and innovative classroom. Students are encouraged to work together in teams to discuss complex math problems, apply math concepts to real-life questions, and analyze algebra deeply and collaboratively. A hands-on project designing and building wind turbines is one of the hand-on learning projects that students in Mr. Moser's class get to experience this year. The student team that designed the most efficient wind turbine discussed their reasoning and results with Rep. McNerney.

This was not the general conversation that the students are used to – Rep. McNerney has his Ph.D. in mathematics, and prior to his election to Congress he founded a company to manufacture wind turbines. “Thinking outside the box and having the determination to follow through will help you learn and enjoy math, as well as succeed in life,” said Rep. McNerney as he mentored the students.

“Meeting someone from their community who uses math to solve major energy and environmental issues helps students relate what they are doing in their middle school math classes to future careers,” said Sharon Twitty, the SLOPE i3 Project director. One of the SLOPE i3 Project's main goals is to increase the number of students who go on to college and enter STEM careers.

“After meeting Rep. McNerney, our students now see that a strong foundation in algebra and a passion for STEM can propel them all the way to Congress,” Antioch Unified Superintendent Don Gill said.

In addition to an enriched algebra curriculum that includes project-based learning, the SLOPE i3 Project also includes a summer math proficiency camp for students needing extra help, after school support during the school year, an integrated college-awareness curriculum, and professional development and peer coaching for teachers. Middle schools in Antioch Unified School District, Fort Bragg Union School District, Los Angeles Unified School District-North, Hayward Unified School District, Lakeport Unified School District, Newman Crows Landing Unified School District, Pasadena Unified School District, Patterson Joint Unified School District, Porterville Unified School District, Potter Valley Community Unified School District, San Lorenzo Unified School District, Ukiah Unified School District, and Willits Unified School District are participating in the project.

The SLOPE i3 Project is unique due to its rigorous research design, which utilizes the scientific method used in clinical studies such as medical research. “Evidence-based education research studies like the SLOPE i3 Project are extremely important for understanding which instructional strategies should be pursued, and such studies deserve federal funding,” said Rep. McNerney.

For more information about the SLOPE i3 Project, visit <http://arches-cal.org/i3/>.



Congressman McNerney and Antioch Unified School District Superintendent Don Gill answer students’ questions about math, careers, and Congress.



The student team that designed the most efficient wind turbine talked with Congressman McNerney, Antioch Unified Superintendent Don Gill, and the SLOPE i3 Project team.

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