



**November 7, 2012**

## **New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) Seeking 6 Industry Partners to Reduce Skills Shortages**

The New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) is pleased to announce that it has received a three-year \$900,000 grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) for a New England-wide project titled **Problem Based Learning (PBL) in Advanced Manufacturing: Transforming 21<sup>st</sup> Century Technician Education**. Funding is provided through the NSF's Advanced Technological Education (ATE) program to improve science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education.

That New England-based advanced manufacturers are concerned about manpower shortages that constrain growth prospects is not news. Unfortunately, thousands of jobs remain vacant due to a lack of skilled workers. To address this shortage in New England, the project will develop a series of authentic problem-based case studies, called "Challenges," in advanced manufacturing in collaboration with regional industry partners. The multidisciplinary web-based instructional modules will focus on sustainable practices in advanced manufacturing in fields such as aerospace, optics, precision measurement, medical devices and nanotechnology, and will provide professional development instruction for high school and college in-service educators.

Not only will students learn advanced manufacturing technical skills, they will also learn critical thinking and problem-solving skills as well as how to work in teams — all skills critical to the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace.

NEBHE is currently recruiting six advanced manufacturing businesses to partner in the development of the PBL Challenges, beginning in 2013. Collaboration with this project would entail working with the project team to identify a technical problem that your organization has solved, having the project team spend part of a day video taping the reenactment of how the corporate team solved the problem, reviewing a draft of the educational module, and approving it for inclusion on the project website and subsequent use in high schools, community colleges and four-year colleges and universities across New England.

Participation in this project will not only contribute toward a more competitive New England workforce, it will also be an opportunity to showcase your organization's products and services.

To see a sample of one of the existing educational modules, please visit [www.pblprojects.org](http://www.pblprojects.org). For further information contact Project Director Fenna Hanes at [fhanes@nebhe.org](mailto:fhanes@nebhe.org) or at 617-357-9620 x129

Since 1955, the New England Board of Higher Education has promoted greater educational opportunities for the residents of New England. Our core functions include programs and services focused on cost savings and affordability and college access and success. We also provide policy leadership on key issues related to education and promote dialogue, research and analysis, and best practices related to education and the New England economy.