

Press Release

Embargoed until October 6, 2008

Contact:

Neil Sullivan
Boston Private Industry Council
617-488-1320
Neil.sullivan@bostonpic.org

Stephanie Lee
Verizon
617-743-5440
stephanie.s.lee@verizon.com

**Verizon Contributes \$90,000 to the Boston Private Industry Council
for MCAS Support at the Workplace**

BOSTON – Hundreds of high school students across Boston will be better prepared to pass the MCAS exam this year thanks to a contribution from Verizon.

Verizon Foundation donated \$90,000 to help Boston public high school students who have failed the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) exams and are at risk of not graduating. Through the Boston PIC's Classroom at the Workplace program, students who have failed the exams will spend the summer and after school time during the school year taking remediation courses.

At the Boston Private Industry Council's (PIC) board of directors meeting today, Donna Cupelo, Region President of Verizon, presented a check to the PIC's Classroom at the Workplace program.

“Verizon’s commitment to graduation for all high school students is unwavering,” said Neil Sullivan, executive director of the Boston Private Industry Council. “Verizon is a valued partner to the PIC and the Boston Public Schools. The students who pass MCAS with the support of this program refuse to be left behind.”

The grant will allow the Boston PIC staff to recruit students from the Boston public high schools who may have more difficulty passing the MCAS tests. Many students have attempted and failed the MCAS at least three times by the time they enroll in the program. About one-quarter of the student participants are enrolled in special education and over one-third are English language learners. In Massachusetts, students are required to pass the tenth grade English language arts and mathematics exams to graduate with a diploma.

“As one of the largest private sector employers in Massachusetts, we understand how important a good education is to preparing students to succeed in the workforce,” said Donna Cupelo, Verizon Region President of New England. “The Boston PIC shares this belief and is dedicated to ensuring that all Boston Public School students have the opportunity to perform well in school and achieve their career goals.”

Since inception in 1999, more than 1,140 students from the Boston Public Schools have participated in the Classroom at the Workplace program. Seventy percent (70%) of participants have gone on to pass both MCAS tests after participating in the program, while 90% pass at least one. For students who failed the MCAS at least three times prior to participating in the program, this is a substantial accomplishment. The program also boasts nearly a 90% average hourly attendance rate.

Verizon was one of three companies to pilot the program in 1999 in anticipation of the MCAS graduation requirement for the class of 2003. Since that time, Verizon has provided summer jobs, and provided class space for the program.

About the Boston Private Industry Council

The Boston Private Industry Council (PIC) is a public-private partnership that connects business, the Boston Public Schools, higher education, government, labor, and community organizations to create innovative workforce and education solutions. For more information, visit www.bostonpic.org.

About Verizon

The Verizon Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Verizon Communications, supports the advancement of literacy and K-12 education through its signature program, Thinkfinity.org, and fosters awareness and prevention of domestic violence. In 2007, the foundation awarded more than \$67.4 million in grants to nonprofit agencies in the United States and abroad. The foundation also matched the charitable donations of Verizon employees and retirees, resulting in \$25.1 million in combined contributions. Through Verizon Volunteers, one of the nation's largest employee volunteer programs, Verizon employees and retirees have volunteered more than 3 million hours of community service since Verizon's inception in 2000. For more information on the foundation, visit www.verizon.com/foundation.

Verizon Communications Inc. (NYSE:VZ), headquartered in New York, is a leader in delivering broadband and other wireline and wireless communication innovations to mass market, business, government and wholesale customers. Verizon Wireless operates America's most reliable wireless network, serving nearly 69 million customers nationwide. Verizon's Wireline operations include Verizon Business, which delivers innovative and seamless business solutions to customers around the world, and Verizon Telecom, which brings customers the benefits of converged communications, information and entertainment services over the nation's most advanced fiber-optic network. A Dow 30 company, Verizon employs a diverse workforce of more than 228,600 and last year generated consolidated operating revenues of \$93.5 billion. For more information, visit www.verizon.com.

#####