



**International Technology and Engineering
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NEWS RELEASE For Immediate Release

ITEEA/SITE Recognized with MacArthur 21st Century Learning Lab Award

RESTON, VA, June 18, 2010 – The *International Technology and Engineering Educators Association* (ITEEA) and the *Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education* (SITE) have been recognized by the MacArthur Foundation for their joint effort to support children’s engineering in the nation’s schools. The Fab@School 3D fabricator is at the center of their winning entry in the first MacArthur Foundation *Learning Labs* competition. The Fab@School submission was selected from more than 800 entries in the competition, cosponsored by the MacArthur Foundation and the White House *Office of Science and Technology Policy*. The SITE/ITEEA Fab@School project was designated by the sponsors as the "most novel use of new media in support of learning."

The nation’s Chief Technology Officer, Aneesh Chopra, announced the winners of the *21st Century Learning Lab Designers* competition as part of the first-ever National Lab Day. The partnership between science and engineering societies and educators was launched in response to Obama’s call to raise American students to the top of science and math achievement. The President concluded that the future of the Nation depends upon our ability to encourage young people to “create and build and invent.”

The Fab@School 3D fabricator is being jointly designed by the Cornell College of Engineering and the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia. This classroom desktop manufacturing laboratory will allow students to create three-dimensional objects—from model skyscrapers and bridges to plants and animals—using a digital fabricator. FableVision and Software Mackiev are developing digital fabrication software for elementary students as a matching contribution to the MacArthur Learning Labs award. The *Fab@School Designer* software will allow students to design objects on a computer and then send them to the fabricator to produce the physical object.



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Young students typically have not had the opportunity to see their concepts make the trip from an initial conceptual idea to a final physical form. The Fab@School fabricator will allow students this opportunity for the first time, facilitating the incorporation of children's engineering into K-12 education. The goal of the Fab@School initiative is to fundamentally change how Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines are approached in the nation's elementary classrooms.

"The success of this idea in such a prestigious competition is evidence of the combination of creativity and rigor behind these plans to develop digital fabrication as a pathway for children's engineering," Robert Pianta, Dean of the Curry School, said. "This project truly represents a collaborative effort that brings math, technology, curriculum development and teacher preparation together to address a critical educational and social problem—the learning of analysis, problem-solving, math and science in the context of engineering. To be doing this work in elementary education is indeed a breakthrough."

A cover story in *Wired* magazine [www.wired.com/magazine/2010/01/ff_newrevolution/all/1] describes the extent to which digital fabrication will change society in the 21st century. The MacArthur Foundation website features comments about the Fab@School project. The project received 200 comments from around the world [www.dmlcompetition.net/pligg/story.php?title=630] with reactions from Hong Kong, Portugal, Brazil, New Zealand, Australia, The Netherlands, Austria, Lithuania, Italy and the United States. One commentator wrote "Enabling elementary students to gain early access to the tools and skills that will put them at the forefront of this revolution seems a necessary step in revitalizing American competitiveness within the STEM disciplines."

For further information, please contact ITEEA at iteea@iteea.org or 703-860-2100.

International Technology and Engineering Educators Association (ITEEA): www.iteea.org

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