

NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 11, 2008

Media contacts:

Sharon B. Shaffer
215-963-6200
sharon.b.shaffer@verizon.com

Lee Gierczynski
412-633-5574
lee.j.gierczynski@verizon.com

Teachers Throughout Pennsylvania to Receive Free Educational Resources and Training on Thinkfinity.org Through \$100,000 Verizon Grant

HERSHEY, Pa. – The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has received a \$100,000 grant from the Verizon Foundation to train teachers to use the free educational resources available on Thinkfinity.org and to raise awareness of the program within the state.

The Verizon grant, announced Monday (Feb. 11) by the PDE during the Pennsylvania Educational Technology Expo & Conference here, will be part of a three-year partnership with

PDE and will help Pennsylvania teachers quickly gain expertise with, and access to, the online resources of Thinkfinity.org.

Thinkfinity.org is the Verizon Foundation's free, comprehensive program and online portal to 55,000 educational resources, including standards-based, grade-specific, K-12 lesson plans and interactive tools and materials for students provided in partnership with many of the nation's leading educational and literacy organizations.

Thinkfinity.org offers elementary through high school teachers resources across eight academic disciplines, from science to English to mathematics, to improve student achievement. Thinkfinity.org is designed to help teachers gain access to online resources quickly and requires no passwords or software downloads.

“Since taking office, Gov. Edward G. Rendell and the Department of Education have advocated the use of innovative technology in the classroom to aid student achievement,” Education Secretary Gerald L. Zahorchak said. “The Verizon/Thinkfinity grant will provide Pennsylvania with an opportunity to thoughtfully populate the resources and materials component of a standards-aligned system, with resources and materials that support our curricular frameworks.”

In addition to providing standards-based resources from the nation's leading educational and literacy organizations, Thinkfinity.org also offers a free, robust professional development program for teachers and trainers.

The Verizon grant will be used to:

- Provide professional development opportunities to classroom teachers statewide, utilizing an established cadre of mentors.

- Provide Thinkfinity.org resources aligned to state academic standards and assessment anchors in support of Pennsylvania’s Standards Aligned Systems (SAS) initiative.
- Raise awareness of Thinkfinity.org resources and professional development opportunities to educators statewide through the coaching and mentoring communities of practice already established within the state’s educational portal.

“Verizon is proud to partner with the Pennsylvania Department of Education and educators in their mission to increase student achievement and empower today’s students with the skills to pursue a life of learning and the high-tech skills for tomorrow’s global job market,” said William B. Petersen, president – Verizon Pennsylvania. “Through Thinkfinity.org, teachers gain immediate access to quality educational resources to more efficiently develop their lesson plans, giving them more time to work directly with students.”

The Pennsylvania Department of Education oversees Pennsylvania’s public schools, including its 501 school districts, 29 intermediate units and other local education agencies. The department’s mission is to lead and serve the educational community in order to enable each individual to grow into an inspired, productive and fulfilled lifelong learner.

Content for Thinkfinity is provided through a partnership between the Verizon Foundation and 11 of the nation’s leading organizations in the fields of education and literacy: the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the International Reading Association, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, National Center for Family Literacy, National Council on Economic Education, National Endowment for the Humanities, National Council of Teachers of English, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics,

National Geographic Society, ProLiteracy Worldwide and the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.

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 66 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 nearly 235,000 and last year generated consolidated operating revenues of \$93.5 billion. For more information, visit www.verizon.com.

####

VERIZON'S ONLINE NEWS CENTER: Verizon news releases, executive speeches and biographies, media contacts, high quality video and images, and other information are available at Verizon's News Center on the World Wide Web at www.verizon.com/news. To receive news releases by e-mail, visit the News Center and register for customized automatic delivery of Verizon news releases.