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**SCIENCE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY OFFICIALLY OPENS
MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL--FOCUSES ON CREATING “21ST CENTURY CITIZENS”**

*Innovative, Collaborative Partnership Between
The Franklin Institute & School District of Philadelphia Admits First Graduating Class*

Philadelphia, PA. – September 20, 2006 -- The Franklin Institute and its partner, the School District of Philadelphia, proudly mark the official opening of the **Science Leadership Academy** with a brief program and ribbon-cutting ceremony on **Thursday, September 28th** at 10 AM. This special admission school offers students a college preparatory curriculum with a focus on science, technology, mathematics and entrepreneurship. Students learn in a project-based environment where the core values of inquiry, research, collaboration, presentation and reflection are emphasized in all classes. In keeping with the school’s focus on science, the student uniform includes a white lab coat.

“This is a true reciprocal partnership. Students will interact with our staff and learn about our exhibits, programs and resources; and in turn, we will learn from the students,” states **Dennis Wint**, President and CEO of The Franklin Institute. “We’re counting on their fresh perspective as young adults to translate the knowledge and insights from their experiences at The Franklin Institute and help develop new and innovative projects.”

“The Board of The Franklin Institute strongly supports the Science Leadership Academy as a commitment to young people in Philadelphia,” adds **Marsha Perelman**, Chair, Board of Trustees. “We look forward to future contributions of these outstanding students to science and technology within the City and our Region.”

Located at 55 N. 22nd Street, SLA is within walking distance of The Franklin Institute and minutes from Philadelphia’s many cultural institutions and research centers. Situated in a 72,000 square foot space that formerly housed the School District’s Human Resources and Legal staff, the Science Leadership Academy features four science labs and two prep areas, fifteen general classrooms, an interactive media center, a 2D/3D art studio, an open seating café-style lunchroom and a fitness/cardio room.

The design of the building was a collaboration of representatives from the School District, The Franklin Institute, SLA School Principal, and Philadelphia Management (owner of the building). Design and construction were managed by Stephen Varenhorst Architects, AIA. The school features:

- Four science labs and two science prep areas
- Interactive media center
- Fitness/cardio room
- Open seating café
- Fifteen general classrooms
- 2D/3D Art Studio
- Vocal Music/Drama suite

“The opening of the Science Leadership Academy demonstrates once again that the School District of Philadelphia is keeping its promise to offer more school choice by creating new, small high schools,” said School District of Philadelphia CEO, **Paul G. Vallas**. “With its rigorous, inquiry-based curriculum, the Science Leadership Academy is a noteworthy addition to the ranks of secondary schools in our District.”

SLA is one of the district schools pioneering the notion of the 21st Century School. Instead of textbooks, all students receive an Apple laptop computer for use in home and school. The school’s website (www.scienceleadership.org) uses open-source course management software to create an online component for all classes as well as school-wide discussion forums. Students will use logging, podcasting and digital filmmaking to learn the tools of 21st century literacy and establish the school’s voice on the web.

SLA’s partnership with The Franklin Institute is multi-faceted. In May, 2006, The Franklin Institute announced that all SLA students and their families would receive a Family Membership to The Franklin Institute. In addition, The Franklin Institute has been instrumental in the creation of the SLA Ambassadors, a group of university, business, government and community leaders who will open doors to institutional and professional resources for the school, and serve as public advocates for SLA in the Greater Philadelphia area.

Through a unique program called “***Wednesdays at the Franklin***,” the ninth-grade class will further their project-based, interdisciplinary studies through a weekly workshop at The Franklin Institute. Facilitated by the renowned TFI Education Staff, “***Wednesdays***” will immerse students in the exhibits, programs and rich resources in the history of science housed at the museum and engage them in developing innovative projects based on their experiences at The Franklin Institute.

“It is natural that the School District of Philadelphia has developed a new high school which focuses on science curriculum in an innovative and creative way,” states School Reform Commission Chairman, **James E. Nevels**. “We thank the staff of The Franklin Institute for partnering with us to design the curriculum and select the faculty, and for their commitment to an ongoing involvement in this new and exciting school.”

The 110 students starting at the SLA represent 48 different schools in the Philadelphia school district. They reflect the population of the City of Philadelphia -- African-American, Caucasian, Latino, Asian-American and Native American, and will be schooled in SLA’s core values of ***inquiry, research, collaboration, presentation and reflection***. “The entire SLA team is excited as we begin the process of educating the next generation with state-of-the-art, cutting edge technology and curriculums.” states Chris Lehmann, founding principal of the Science Leadership Academy. “We look forward to training citizens for the 21st century.”

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