@Scale Endorsements
FAQ

1) **What is the purpose of the @Scale Endorsement?**

   I. **To target gaps** based on the goals defined in Massachusetts STEM plan and quantified through rigorous data analysis.
      • The target gaps will be reevaluated for each cycle of @Scale endorsements. Projects that do not address the current gaps will have opportunities for consideration in subsequent cycles.

   II. To identify scale-ready projects that have a demonstrated history of results in addressing and closing the targeted gaps AND incorporate the essential characteristics for successful scale-up.

   III. **To build a portfolio of projects, over time, for consideration by funding and implementation partners as initiatives that, through replication and or scale-up, can benefit the greatest number of students and close critical opportunity, achievement, and inspiration gaps, quickly.**

2) **What is the nature of @Scale Endorsements?**

   We anticipate that there will be a clear separation between projects that have previously demonstrated the characteristics for scale-up from projects that have not. We expect to provide feedback to projects about specific characteristics that need to be strengthened. This will inform and improve the caliber of all @Scale projects over time.

3) **What do you mean by “Nearly Prepared” Students?**

   The MassCORE STEM program of study recommends 4 years of mathematics and 3 years of lab science coursework.

   *Prepared* = students who fulfill the MassCORE STEM recommendations.

   *Nearly Prepared* = students who need no more than one year of additional coursework (in math and/or science) to fulfill the MassCORE STEM recommendations.

   Data Source: SAT Registration Questionnaire responses by test-takers from Massachusetts public schools.

4) **What do you mean by “Near Interested” Students?**

   *Interested* = student’s first choice for a career or college major is a STEM field.

   *Near Interested* = student’s first choice for a career or college major is NOT a STEM field, but they do express a general interest in STEM fields
Many STEM-prepared students are generally interested in STEM fields, but are not committing to them for a career or college major. Students who do not start a STEM college major track during freshman year often have difficulty transferring into a STEM major. As a result, students should be encouraged to “start STEM first” – that is, make a STEM field their first choice in order to not miss out on an opportunity for which they are prepared.

Data Source: SAT Registration Questionnaire responses by test-takers from Massachusetts public schools.

5) What comes next after @Scale Endorsement?

The portfolio of projects that receive @Scale Endorsements will be listed on the STEM Pipeline website. We anticipate that potential funding partners will seek more detailed information about these projects and may solicit comprehensive proposals for specific scale-up initiatives. As is always the case, project leaders will be expected to directly engage funding and implementation partners (Schools and School Districts, Teachers, non-profit community organizations, Higher Education institutions, others) to establish a coalition necessary for successful implementation.

6) Where can I find a copy of the Massachusetts STEM Plan?

A. Version 1.0 of The Massachusetts STEM Plan can be found here on the official state website.

7) What time will the @Scale endorsements be announced on June 23?

A: The Governor’s STEM Advisory Council meeting is scheduled for 2:30-4:00. The @Scale endorsements will be announced during that meeting.

8) Please describe in more detail what you mean by “the funding model that would be necessary to support and sustain your project through scale-up”?

A: We are interested in understanding if in your project would leverage existing overhead and indirect expenses and only require funding for direct expenses related to serving more schools, teachers or students, or whether the project would require funding to cover incremental indirect and overhead expenses as well as direct expenses.

9) If I manage a large program consisting of a number of projects and activities which address a set of goals broader than the ones identified for this round of endorsement, should I apply for endorsement of my entire program or should I apply for endorsement only for those activities?

A. While a project may provide a broad range of features and activities we will limit our endorsement consideration to ensuring that projects clearly addresses the goals identified as the focus for this round of @Scale endorsement. Additional features of a project will not be a consideration of this endorsement process.

Projects that can be replicated or scaled-up will be the focus of this endorsement, not activities within a project.
10) If two activities within a single project address the goals of this first round call for applications, should I submit a single application or two separate applications?

A. The endorsement will apply to complete projects that can be replicated or scaled-up. Only one application should be submitted for a project.

11) Does the phrase “key attribute” in Question Ph1 G5 refer to any specific part of the Plan?

A. No. Please focus your proposal on addressing how the project addresses the goals defined for this round of endorsement.

12) How should I format my responses to the application questions? Should I embed my responses within the application, or should I make reference to a question number and respond on a separate form?

A. We recommend that you do not embed your responses within the online document. Instead, we recommend you create a separate document for your responses and reference the question number.

13) Does the 5-page limit for the application include the space taken up by the questions themselves? How do we make sure to capture the salient points in only 5 pages when, typically, applications require much longer responses?

A. No, the 5-page limit does not include restated questions. (See answer to #12 above.) This application is intended to provide the STEM Advisory Council with sufficient information to consider a project for @Scale endorsement.

14) In order for my project to be eligible, must it address only current high school juniors and seniors (e.g. high school programs)? If I can make the case that my program addresses the stated goals of this round, but targets younger students, can I still apply for endorsement?

A. We are seeking to identify projects that address the stated goals, impacting the greatest number of students in the near term. The timeline to affect outcomes related to the goals will be a consideration for the @Scale endorsement process.

15) How does the January 2011 online project survey, administered jointly by the Department of Higher Education and the UMass Donahue Institute, relate to this @Scale endorsement process?

A. The online project survey served a different purpose. There is no direct connection of the January 2011 survey to the @Scale endorsement process.

16) Are you focusing only on projects that have actually scaled to some degree in the past, or is it sufficient for a project to demonstrate the capacity to scale?

A. A demonstrated history of successful replication or scale-up is not a prerequisite for consideration for an @Scale endorsement. Projects must at a minimum address a readiness for replication or scale-up.
17) What is the role of the Regional STEM Networks in this process?

A. The Regional STEM Networks are not involved in the selection of projects for endorsement. However, the Regional STEM Networks play several important roles such as the liaison to the STEM Advisory Council and the Operations Board, and as an important resource for coordinating the scaling of projects from region to region or statewide. Through this process the Regional Networks will be more fully informed of projects in their region.

18) How will the regional STEM networks be notified of projects submitted from their geography?

A. Per the online instructions, applicants are asked to inform their affiliated Regional STEM Network of their submitted application. Names and contact information of the regional STEM network managers are located on the DHE STEM Pipeline Fund website. The web address is: http://www.mass.edu/forinstitutions/prek16/pipelinenetworks.asp.

19) Must projects collaborate with a Regional Network to be eligible for an @Scale endorsement?

A. No, but we encourage all project managers to engage their Regional STEM Network. Again, contact information can be found on the DHE STEM Pipeline Fund website. (See answer 18 above.)

20) What magnitude of scaling are you looking for? Are you looking only for projects with broad scaling potential or will projects with narrower scaling experience or potential (i.e. school to school) be eligible for endorsement?

A. We are seeking to identify projects that address the stated goals and can impact the greatest number of students in the near term. The potential of a project to impact significant numbers of students will be a consideration for the endorsement process. We also recognize the value of projects that can be replicated or scaled-up to address student needs in less densely populated areas and will take this into consideration as well in the endorsement process.

21) Will the STEM Advisory Council provide funding in association with a project’s @Scale endorsement?

A. No, there is currently no source of funding associated with the @Scale endorsement process. Projects seeking financial support for replication or scale-up should pursue traditional funding channels.

22) Does “scale-up” mean exact replication, or can it allow for modification to my program at the adopting site?

A. A demonstrated history of successful replication or scale-up will be a consideration of this endorsement process. While prior scale-up is not a prerequisite for consideration, projects must at a minimum address a readiness for replication or scale-up.

Any specific implementation requirements for the replication or scale-up of a project are beyond the scope of the @Scale endorsement process.
23) Is this application the equivalent of an executive summary of a more formal RFP? Will you be asking for more detail later in this process?

A. This application is a two-phase process. Only those projects that meet the defined goals and the @Scale criteria will be invited to apply to Phase 2 of this endorsement process and will at that time be asked to provide more detail.

24) Will you publicize the projects invited to complete Phase 2 of the application?

A. Yes. We will announce those projects on the website and we will notify the affiliated Regional STEM Network.

25) Who do we contact if we have additional questions?

A. All questions should be sent to: STEMProjectforScale@bhe.mass.edu. We will acknowledge your question and we will post both your question and our answer on the FAQ sheet located on the website.

26) Will there be subsequent opportunities to apply for a project @Scale endorsement? Will future cycles of this process address the same or different goals in the future?

A. We do anticipate that there will be future opportunities for projects to apply for a project @Scale endorsement although a timetable for subsequent rounds has not been set.

Future cycles of this process may address the same goals or new goals as determined by the STEM Advisory Council.

27) What are your plans for future information sessions, and would you consider conducting a webinar?

A. Any future information sessions will be announced on the STEM Pipeline Fund website and also communicated to the regional STEM network managers. We will look at the feasibility of hosting future information sessions as webinars.

28) Must projects focus broadly on STEM or can a project focus on a particular discipline, such as math or science?

A. We set no restriction on a project’s STEM focus. The focus can be broad or narrow. The more important consideration is that the project addresses one or both of the critical goals identified in the application documents.

29) Do you plan to weigh different components of the application when considering endorsement?

A. The intent of the @Scale endorsement is to identify projects that address the identified goals and scaling criteria for project endorsement. We anticipate that projects will have a broad range of scale characteristics and the endorsement process will take that into consideration.
30) Will the project feedback be made public?
   A. Written feedback will be provided to each project leader. We anticipate that what we learn from this process that can be provided as generalized feedback to all projects will be posted on the STEM website.

31) Do we have a target number of projects you plan to endorse?
   A. No, any project that meets the eligibility criteria is a candidate for endorsement.

32) Must collaboration partners and potential implementation funders be identified in the application?
   A. No.

33) Can a collaboration of projects apply as a single entity or must each project apply individually?
   A. This process will consider clearly identified projects that can be replicated or scaled and can demonstrate a history of success with prior replication and scale-up. A collaboration of projects could combine to develop and present a new project for @Scale endorsement consideration.

34) Must a project already be in existence and demonstrated some level of success to be considered for endorsement?
   A. Prior history of a project’s success in addressing the defined goals and replication or scale-up will be primary considerations for endorsement.

35) Of the five quantitative goals listed on Page 2 of the application, four relate to students, and the fifth relates to teachers. Are the projects intended to deal with students or teachers?
   A. This initial cycle of @Scale endorsements addresses two quantifiable gaps which relate directly to student achievement and interest in STEM subjects. Future cycles of @Scale endorsements will address other goals described in the Massachusetts STEM Plan, prioritized by the STEM Advisory Council.

36) My project spans multiple regions. Do I need to notify all affiliated Regional STEM Networks or can I just notify one?
   A. You can notify just one Regional STEM Network but we would encourage you to notify all the regions where your project has a presence.

37) Are non-profit organizations eligible to submit projects for @Scale endorsement consideration?
   A. Any organization that believes it has a project that meets the eligibility criteria can submit an application.