

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 350**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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**In the Year Two Thousand Nine**  
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An Act Relative to Inquiry-Based Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Education..

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1           Whereas, Massachusetts, and the nation as a whole, is falling behind in STEM (Science,  
2 Technology, Mathematics and Engineering) education, as compared to global statistics, the  
3 Massachusetts DESE (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) has recently  
4 supported the need to enhance 21st Century Skills training in STEM fields within public schools;  
5 therefore, this bill establishes the STEM inquiry course of instruction, during or outside of school  
6 hours, and authorizes school districts to obtain and utilize funds from outside sources.

7           Section 1. Chapter 71 of the Massachusetts General Laws is hereby amended by adding  
8 Section 90, as follows:

9           Each school district shall develop and implement a plan to include inquiry based  
10 instruction for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)-related fields taught in  
11 public schools; such plans may include required involvement in extracurricular programs or  
12 projects outside of normal school hours. These programs may be funded from sources outside of  
13 town or school budgets, such as non-profit grants or donations from local businesses. Inquiry

14 based instruction projects may include science fairs, robotics fairs and other programs involving  
15 creative thinking, communications skills and other inquiry 21st Century Skills, as defined by the  
16 MA DESE.

17 School districts shall supplement their professional development programs, as defined in  
18 Chapter 71, Section 38Q, with relevant courses and workshops offered by various institutions  
19 throughout the state, e.g. the course 'Teaching Science through the Inquiry Process,' offered by  
20 the Massachusetts State Science & Engineering Fair through the University of Massachusetts.