



Altria Provides \$1 Million Grant to the Thurgood Marshall College Fund to Support its STEM Teacher Quality and Retention Program

New York, NY (July 12, 2012) – Altria Group and the Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCf) inaugurated a partnership to launch two new sites for the TMCf's Teacher Quality and Retention Program (TQRP), which recruits future middle school teachers to specialize in the important academic areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). A \$1-million grant from Altria enabled TMCf to establish summer teaching institutes at Virginia State University in Petersburg, Va., and Tennessee State University in Nashville, Tenn. The institutes feature master teachers working with the new teaching recruits to learn hands-on, inquiry-based approaches to making math and science instruction relevant and fun.

"Our country is reaching a critical turning point, where the workforce pipeline contains too few students with the skills and knowledge they need for high-demand careers in the science, technology and engineering sectors," said Jennifer Hunter, senior vice president for Corporate Affairs, Altria Client Services. "We believe our investment in TQRP will help more kids get engaged with these subjects, earlier in their school years – by building a larger pool of teachers in Richmond and Nashville who are best prepared to interest urban students in STEM."

According to a report by the Business Higher Education Forum, the U.S. will have a shortage of over 280,000 math and science teachers by 2015. In response, TMCf has partnered with the National Math and Science Initiative's UTeach program and with the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards to prepare math and science teachers to serve in high-need schools. Since 2009, TMCf and its partners have provided career development, leadership training and mentoring to over 150 aspiring and new teachers from public Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Altria's recent grant supports the development of nearly 50 education and STEM teaching majors selected from 26 public HBCUs across the country.

The TQRP approach is unique in that it provides financial resources, training and mentoring to new teachers from pre-service through the critical first three years of teaching. Education and STEM majors attending TMCf's network of 47 public HBCUs are eligible to apply to the program. In addition, TMCf focuses on recruiting African American males and STEM majors to address the shortage of National Board Certified Teachers, as well as the shortage of qualified science and math teachers in high-need schools.

"TQRP is one of our signature programs. HBCUs' historic tradition of producing teachers, coupled with TMCf's experience in school reform, is an ideal platform for the delivery of this expanded effort to directly impact teacher quality and retention in our country's urban and rural communities," said TMCf's President & CEO Johnny C. Taylor, Jr.

For more information about the program please visit www.thurgoodmarshallcollegefund.org.

WHAT: TMCf Teacher Quality and Retention Program STEM Summer Institute

WHERE: Virginia State University, July 8-21, 2012

WHEN: Media are welcome at anytime during the duration of the this program

ABOUT ALTRIA

Altria supports organizations working to improve educational outcomes for underserved youth, while also addressing the demand for a diverse, highly skilled workforce. Altria Group and its companies focus their education contributions in four areas:

- Middle- and high-school enrichment programs for urban public schools, particularly those that contribute to everyday student success, math and science excellence, and access to and preparation for higher education;
- Technical education at community colleges and universities, including agricultural studies programs at select land-grant institutions;
- Strengthening management skills among school leaders; and
- Higher education and scholarship support.

ABOUT THE THURGOOD MARSHALL COLLEGE FUND

The Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCf) is named for the U.S. Supreme Court's first African-American Justice. Established in 1987, TMCf supports and represents nearly 300,000 students attending its 47 member-schools that include *public* Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), medical schools and law schools. TMCf helps students with a clear intention and the motivation to succeed and acquire a high-quality college education at an affordable cost. TMCf also efficiently connects high performing, world-ready students with top tier employment opportunities—access that students or employers might not have on their own. Through its scholarships and programs, TMCf plays a key role in preparing the leaders of tomorrow. TMCf is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt, charitable organization. For more information about TMCf and its initiatives, visit: www.ThurgoodMarshallCollegeFund.org