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**For Immediate Release:**

## **Cambridge Celebrates Opening of First Near Net Zero Martin Luther King Jr. School Complex**

**Cambridge, MA, March 2, 2016** -- On February 28, Cambridge city and school officials hosted a special celebration event and tours of its first near net zero school building. The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. School complex, which opened in December 2015, houses the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School, the Putnam Avenue Upper School, and the Department of Human Service Programs' Preschool, After-School, and Community School programs. The 170,000 square foot complex located at 100-102 Putnam Avenue, Cambridge, accommodates 740 students.

Designed by Perkins Eastman, the building embodies Net Zero ideals and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) in action. The challenge was to develop a design that utilized every possible square foot of the building and campus in support of the students' education while also creating a high-performance building that used as little energy as possible while also producing as much energy as possible. Throughout the building are embedded opportunities for students to explore the arts, sustainability, and engineering concepts – including math-themed interactive artwork and interpretive displays with signage illuminating the facility's use of insulation and sustainable materials, consideration of natural light, and reliance on systems for solar energy collection, geothermal heating, and grey water reclamation. The construction manager for the project was Rich-Caulfield a Joint Venture.

Expected to achieve LEED-Platinum certification, the building is designed to generate an Energy Use Intensity 60% less than typical educational buildings in New England. LEED, or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, is an internationally recognized green building certification system by the U.S. Green Building Council.

Cambridge City Manager Richard C. Rossi, who served as Master of Ceremonies, commended the tremendous collaboration and teamwork that contributed to the success of this project, especially after a fire caused considerable damage and delayed the opening of the school by a few months.

"This new complex is the latest example of Cambridge's commitment to architecture that is both beautiful and sustainable," said Rossi. "As you tour the facility, you will see many of the NetZero principles that are incorporated. The photovoltaic panels help generate over 40% of the building's electrical needs. There are geothermal wells that are used for heating and cooling and a tank that collects rainwater that is used for non-potable water and irrigation systems."

Cambridge Mayor E. Denise Simmons addressed the city's commitment to schools and the community. "This building is only the first in a multi-year, multi-school building program aimed at enhancing and improving the quality of learning environments for students in Cambridge Public Schools," Simmons said.

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Designed to engage the community, the architects explained how the academic wings for the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. School and the Putnam Avenue Upper School operate as distinct “neighborhoods” with their own “front door,” connected by an internal thoroughfare named King Street. The shared community spaces—preschool, library/media room, cafeteria, gymnasiums, and auditorium—are located in the “heart” of the building and are accessible from King Street for after-hours use.

Finally, the building itself is a literal teaching tool with are cutouts in the corridors that show the building’s mechanical system at work so students will understand how the energy they use, and save, manifests. Signage is placed throughout the building explaining these systems and processes. In keeping with the idea of the building as a teaching tool, the interior concept is Learning Through the Seasons. The colors of the seasons are reflected in the wings of the building and serve as a wayfinding device while they promote a sense of community for each of the programs.

“Cambridge students, staff and families thank the city for its vision and generosity in building this remarkable facility, said Dr. Jeffrey Young, Superintendent of Schools. “Of course, a building becomes a school only when teaching and learning are taking place inside; the buzz of activity reminds all of us just how important public education truly is. Our staff and students are already doing great work in the new school, and I am confident that they will make the city proud of their achievements in the years ahead. We are committed to living up to the ideals expressed by the names of the two schools that share the building: our faith in education as the means to social justice will keep Dr. King alive in everything we do, and the history and spirit of the neighborhood, as represented by the name Putnam Avenue, will help us strive to keep true to the goodness of our community.”

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**Photos: Please provide credit to Bethany Versoy.**

**Caption:** Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jeffrey Young speaks to students at the new MLK School complex.