



## Officials: College savings program 1st of its kind in country

Matt Stout Sunday, December 13, 2015



State Treasurer Deborah Goldberg is launching a state-run and privately funded college savings program in Worcester, a pilot initiative her office says is the first of its kind in the country and that could ultimately branch out to the entire state.

Dubbed \$eedMA, the program will offer Section 529 college savings accounts to the roughly 2,200 kindergarten students in the central Massachusetts city, each with a \$50 commitment paid through a trust fund Goldberg created in her office once families sign up.

“We felt bringing in not only a seeded college account but teaching financial literacy skills, around banking and savings and even retirement savings, would really make a significant difference,” Goldberg said in an interview Friday. “We wanted a diverse community and one that we can do a lot of analysis and data to determine all the best practices as we do it — and then create a standard that can be done statewide.”

Goldberg's office estimates that the initiative will need \$125,000 in private funding upon launching at the beginning of the 2016-2017 school year. Santander Bank has already committed \$50,000.

She'll formally unveil the program tomorrow at the Jacob Hiatt Magnet School in Worcester with Mayor Joe Petty.

"Parents need more tools in the tool box that can make saving for college easier," Petty said in a statement.

Goldberg said the idea, which she sewed into her 2014 treasurer campaign, was sparked by a similar program in Nevada. But she said it's the first to use a 501(c)(3) nonprofit — her Economic Empowerment Trust Fund — and she ultimately wants to expand, depending on how the pilot program goes with the hope of drawing support from other foundations.

She said she's also briefed other state treasurers on her plans.

"We believe that should the pilot be very successful, then we can go to some of the major internationally well known endowed foundations" for support, she said. "But we have to prove the success of this program."