

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
December 11, 2007

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**  
Tommie Sue Anthony  
501.683.7686

**ARKANSAS SCHOOLS SELECTED FOR GRANT TO INCREASE  
AP PARTICIPATION**

The Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math and Science (AAIMS) today announced the first round of schools to be selected to participate in a five-year pilot program to increase participation and scores in Advanced Placement (AP) classes in mathematics, science and English. Governor Beebe, Senator Jim Argue, president of the AAIMS board of directors, and Education Commissioner Ken James recognized the ten schools and their principals in a ceremony at the State Capitol.

The \$800,000 to fund the first year of the program is a part of a \$13.2 million, six-year grant to Arkansas from the National Math and Science Institute (NMSI). Arkansas was one of seven states to receive the NMSI grant this year. The ten first-round schools, which will receive varying amounts of money to institute the initiative, are categorized as either Gain Schools, meaning they have well-established AP programs already with the potential to grow, or Launch Schools, meaning they have recently established AP programs.

The Gain Schools and their principals are:

El Dorado High School, Mr. Larry Walters  
Wilbur D. Mills University Studies High School, Mrs. Janice L. Haynes  
Little Rock Parkview High School, Dr. Linda Brown  
Springdale Har-Ber High School, Mr. Daniel Brackett  
Springdale High School, Dr. Allen Williams

The Launch Schools and their principals are:

Booneville High School, Mr. Steven Halter  
Greenbrier High School, Mr. Steve Lucas  
Greene County Tech High School, Mr. Guy Weeks  
Lake Hamilton High School, Mr. Vernon Brooks  
Newport High School, Mrs. Ronnie K. Erwin

“Arkansas’s economic future is directly linked to the education of our children,” Governor Beebe said. “I want to thank National Math and Science Institute and

ExxonMobil for providing our schools more opportunities to succeed in the education of our children.”

The schools had to commit to the initiative for five years, which includes the willingness to overcoming any obstacles to increasing AP participation and performance. This could mean adding AP classes, changing school schedules and altering AP access policies.

Intensive professional development in delivering quality AP classes in these subject areas will be a significant focus of the initiative at each school. Beginning this summer, extensive professional development will begin for all schools, including the AP Summer Institute, a four-day training on laying the foundation for the initiative at the school, 12 hours of graduate courses at UALR and training throughout the year by the College Board. In addition, designated lead AP teachers in math, science and English from each school will be trained to become AP content experts.

Student and teacher incentives are another approach in the initiative. At Launch schools, students will receive incentives of \$100 for scores of 3, 4 or 5 paid for by the grant. In Gain schools, students may receive incentives if the school opts to reward them at their own expense. Teachers in all project schools will receive varying incentives for 3, 4 and 5 scores by their students.

Other benefits of participating in the initiative include stipends paid to AP teachers for additional time on task; students in all project schools receiving three AP test prep sessions led by content experts from outside the schools and money allotted to help schools purchase additional equipment.

“These steps have been shown through research and experience to have significant, positive impacts on both participation and achievement in AP classes,” Dr. James said. “Increasing access to rigorous courses is good for students and good for our state.”

“Our hope is that the example provided by these schools will be a beacon to all Arkansas schools,” Senator Argue said. “In addition to working with these schools selected for the initiative, the Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math and Science will continue to provide guidance and assistance for any school in the state that wants to improve upon its AP program.”

The final round of about 10 schools will be selected next fall. Those schools will also have to commit to five years of participation in the initiative.

The Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math and Science is a non-profit organization based at UALR, which authored Arkansas' successful grant proposal. Tommie Sue Anthony is its president.