



NEWS RELEASE

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ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AWARDS GRANTS TO IMPROVE TEACHING

The Arkansas Department of Education granted \$1,312,172 to 12 partnerships between local education agencies and higher education institutions to increase the academic achievement of students in mathematics and science by enhancing the content knowledge and teaching skills of classroom teachers. The grants will help more than 500 teachers across the state learn new information in mathematics and science that will support increased student achievement.

Partnerships between high-need school districts and the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) faculty in institutions of higher education are at the core of these improvement efforts. Partners may also include state education agencies, public charter schools or other public schools, businesses and nonprofit or for-profit organizations concerned with mathematics and science education.

"As the state continues efforts to improve the rigor of mathematics and science curriculum and better prepare students for college and the workplace, the Department of Education is pleased to provide professional development opportunities to enhance our teachers' content knowledge and instructional abilities in these core academic subjects," said Dr. Ken James, Commissioner of the Arkansas Department of Education.

The Mathematics and Science Partnership (MSP) program focuses on districts and schools with a high percentage of students from low-income families. Funding for the projects is provided under Title II, Part B of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Grant funds under Title II, Part B are distributed

to each state by the United States Department of Education, with the size of individual awards based on a state's student population and poverty rates.

The first Title II, Part B MSP competitive grants in Arkansas were awarded in 2004. For these awards, the Arkansas Department of Education designated a focus on partnerships to enhance middle level mathematics. The grant competition for 2007 was open to mathematics and/or science within the K-12 grade span. MSP grants are eligible for continuation awards for up to three years. This year's awards include four partnerships entering Year Two of their partnerships. Eight new awards focusing on elementary-middle and secondary mathematics or science will begin Year One of their partnership.

Designed to increase the number of highly qualified teachers in mathematics and science, the projects outlined for 2007-2008 include activities targeting elementary, middle level and/or high school mathematics and science teachers. The projects must focus on either mathematics or science, employ scientifically based research, and have a well-defined partnership among university mathematics, science, and/or engineering faculty and school district participants. Each project must incorporate a summer institute combined with follow-up contact during the academic year that will enhance teachers' ability to implement the standards set forth in the Arkansas Curriculum Framework for Mathematics and Science.

A table is attached detailing funded projects – i.e., the local education agency or higher education institution receiving a grant, project director's contact information, other partners identified in the grant, and the dollar amount for each.

For more information about the Title II (Part B) Math and Science Partnership program, contact Judy Trowell, MSP program administrator, at (501) 682-4247 or Judy.Trowell@arkansas.gov

The Arkansas Department of Education strives to ensure that all children in the state have access to a quality education by providing educators, administrators and staff with leadership, resources and training.