

Knowles Science Teaching Foundation Calls on Presidential Candidates to Reinvigorate National Commitment to the Teaching Profession

Beginning Teacher Recruitment, Support and Retention Integral to Student Success in STEM

Moorestown, NJ, February 21, 2012 — The Knowles Science Teaching Foundation (KSTF), a national advocate for improving the quality of mathematics and science teaching in United States high schools, is calling on the 2012 U.S. presidential candidates to consider a radical shift in the way the U.S. approaches issues that affect our schools and our nation's success in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math). These include recruiting high-achieving recent grads into the profession; investing in their support and ongoing professional development; and improving the conditions and sustainability of beginning teachers' work in order to retain them in the profession.

"Time and time again we hear about the dire need for improving STEM education in the U.S., yet exceptional beginning math and science teachers remain at much greater risk of leaving the profession than other teachers," said Dr. Nicole Gillespie, Director for Teaching Fellowships, Knowles Science Teaching Foundation. "There is simply no way to improve STEM education without supporting excellent STEM teachers. We call on all candidates, regardless of party affiliation, to take up this important issue during the election."

The need for STEM skills in our society is increasing rapidly and so is the need for high-quality teachers who have the talent, training and commitment to help students attain these skills. KSTF, which successfully recruits top graduates from Harvard, Stanford and MIT among other universities into its five-year teaching fellowship program, pioneered a multi-layered approach to recruiting top-caliber prospective teachers and providing them with the extensive professional training that is needed to grow into experienced, master teachers. KSTF maintains a 90% retention rate over five years among its Teaching Fellows, almost double the national retention rate for teachers nationwide.

The work of KSTF Fellows, who teach high school math and science across 40 states and are impacting nearly 20,000 students in the 2011-12 academic year alone, is indicative of what masterful teachers can accomplish with the right

preparation and support:

- Candice Director, a first-year mathematics teacher in San Diego, California, is working with her students to create geometric art pieces as part of a collaborative project with the Museum of Contemporary Art in downtown San Diego. The students' work will be exhibited in the museum this fall.
- London Jenks, a second-year science teacher in Thermopolis, Wyoming, is using smartphones and iPads to engage his students in the process of scientific inquiry. London was one of only 50 teachers from around the globe invited to attend the Google Teacher Academy in Sydney, Australia. His groundbreaking work with technology tools in the classroom was recently profiled in PCMag.
- Liz Ratliff, a third-year mathematics teacher in Camden, South Carolina, will travel to the South Pole this November to participate in the IceCube neutrino telescope project, the biggest research project ever attempted in Antarctica. Liz is the third KSTF Fellow to participate in IceCube and bring polar science directly to students through blogs and webcasts. The Fellows' participation in IceCube has been featured in the Washington Post.

"Political leaders who are looking for examples of what can be accomplished by exemplary, committed STEM teachers should look no further than the KSTF Fellows," said Dr. Gillespie. "The Fellows' work is testament to the fact that commitment to training and supporting the best and brightest young men and women to become master STEM teachers is a critical step towards creating a new generation of math- and science-literate citizens."