

Fact Sheet

Mathematics and Science Partnership Program

National Science Foundation

Background

The Math and Science Partnership (MSP) program at the National Science Foundation supports innovative partnership-driven projects developed to improve K-12 student achievement in math and science. The program is designed to focus on large-scale models that can be widely replicated by state math and science partnership programs through the Department of Education's Math and Science Partnership program.

The three goals of the program are: ensuring that all students have access to, are prepared for, and are encouraged to participate and succeed in, challenging and advanced mathematics and science courses; enhancing the quality, quantity and diversity of the K-12 mathematics and science teacher workforce; and developing evidence-based outcomes that contribute to our understanding of how students effectively learn mathematics and science.

The Director of the NSF awards grants to institutions of higher education or eligible nonprofit organizations (or consortia of such institutions or organizations) to establish mathematics and science education partnership programs to improve elementary and/or secondary mathematics and science instruction. Higher education institutions must enter into a partnership with one or more local educational agency that may also include a state educational agency or one or more businesses. Grants are awarded on a competitive, merit-reviewed basis and are subject to the NSF peer review grant application process.

Types of Activities Supported

Grants shall be used for large scale activities that draw upon the expertise of the partners to improve elementary or secondary education in mathematics or science and that are consistent with state mathematics and science student academic achievement standards, including recruiting and preparing students for careers in elementary or secondary mathematics or science education; professional development programs; innovative preservice and inservice programs that instruct teachers on using technology more effectively in teaching mathematics and science; distance learning programs for teachers or students; offering teacher preparation and certification programs for professional mathematicians, scientists, and engineers who wish to begin a career in teaching; developing or adapting elementary school and secondary school mathematics and science curricular materials that incorporate contemporary research on the science of learning; developing initiatives to increase and sustain the number, quality, and diversity of pre-kindergarten through grade 12 teachers of mathematics and science, especially in underserved areas; using mathematicians, scientists, and engineers employed by private businesses to help recruit and train mathematics and science teachers; and other research opportunities for teachers and students.

Budget Issues

Authorization

Congress passed, and President Bush signed into law, a landmark NSF authorization bill (H.R.4664) in December 2002, which seeks to double NSF funding over five years to strengthen and enhance programs across NSF research and education directorates. The legislation is an

important bipartisan endorsement of NSF and should serve as an important guide for the appropriations committees. The K-12 Math and Science Partnership program is authorized to increase every year through 2005.

Authorization levels for the partnerships are as follows:

Fiscal Year 2003 - \$200 million

Fiscal Year 2004 - \$300 million

Fiscal Year 2005 - \$400 million

The President's FY 2006 Budget

The FY 2004 appropriations bill contained \$139.2 million for the partnership program. The President's proposed FY2005 budget request for the NSF Mathematics and Science Partnerships is \$0. Congress, however, appropriated \$80 million to continue the existing partnerships and reinstated the MSP program in the Education and Human Resources Directorate. The Administration's 2006 budget request has reduced the program to \$60 million which continues to phase out the project by not funding any new partnerships and continuing to fund only those already in existence.

Appropriations for this program are made by the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Science, State and Commerce and Related Agencies, and by the Commerce, Justice, and Science Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

NSF Math and Science Partnership Champions

Congressmen Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY) and Vernon Ehlers (R-MI) both played key roles in the creation of the partnerships at NSF. As Chairman of the House Science Committee, Rep. Boehlert introduced and spearheaded the legislation through Congress. In addition, Rep. Boehlert strongly supported the partnership program at the Department of Education and was a vocal opponent of combining both partnership programs to be administered by NSF, as proposed in 2002. He strongly believes that the programs are individually vital, yet complementary, for the success of our K-12 students in math and science.

Congressmen Ehlers has educated his colleagues about the two partnership programs and can be credited with building support in the House for preserving the two programs.