

Archived Information

National Science Foundation Math and Science Partnership (MSP) Program

Goal Areas: Improving Teacher Knowledge, Building a Research Base

Summary: The Math and Science Partnership (MSP) program supports innovative partnerships that unite the efforts of local school districts with science, mathematics, engineering and education faculties of colleges and universities and with other stakeholders to improve student outcomes in mathematics and science for all students, at all K-12 levels. All MSP-funded projects contribute to the MSP Learning Network, a network of researchers and practitioners studying and evaluating promising strategies to improve K-12 student achievement in mathematics and science. MSP projects are therefore designed to make evidence-based contributions to the learning and teaching knowledge base (NSF 02-190).

Purposes: The MSP program currently supports both (a) Partnership projects and (b) Research, Evaluation and Technical Assistance (RETA) projects. Partnership projects place strong emphases on (a) enhancing teacher quality, quantity, and diversity, with particular attention to strong mathematics/science content knowledge and related pedagogy; and (b) the development of evidence-based outcomes that contribute to greater understanding of how students effectively learn mathematics and science. In MSP-RETA, the Partnerships are research sites for theoretically informed, methodologically rigorous projects that contribute to the understanding of the processes that support continuous improvement of K-12 mathematics and science teaching and learning. RETA also supports rigorous, innovative evaluation projects that develop new models and tools for documenting, assessing and assisting the Partnerships' progress towards their goals; and technical assistance projects that build on a strong research base (NSF 03-541).

Accomplishments/Results: The MSP program made its first awards in late summer/early fall 2002 to 24 Partnership projects and 16 RETA projects. All Partnerships are required to provide baseline student achievement data and teacher workforce data from core partner school districts, as well as outcome goals and annual benchmarks. In addition to a project-specific evaluation required of each funded MSP project, an overall, external evaluation will assess the program as a whole. Furthermore, all NSF projects are subject to external peer review, review by Committees of Visitors, and portfolio review.

Plans for the Next Twelve Months: A second cohort of MSP Partnerships will be awarded in summer of 2003. Full proposals for MSP-RETA are due in mid-May 2003, with awards to be made prior to the end of September 2003. A new announcement/solicitation for a third component of the MSP program, the *MSP Teacher Institutes for the 21st Century*, is anticipated by late summer of 2003, with awards expected in winter 2004. A second annual, national meeting of the MSP Learning Network is planned for late January 2004.