

The OHIO ACADEMY of SCIENCE

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Fostering curiosity, discovery and innovation to benefit society.

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Many of Ohio's STEM students miss Intel International Science & Engineering Fair

Students in 42 Ohio counties have no chance to attend premiere event

For immediate release

Columbus (May 13, 2009)... While more than 20 of their Ohio peers are competing for \$4 million in scholarships and awards this week at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (Intel ISEF) in Reno, NV, students in 42 Ohio counties have no chance to attend because the State of Ohio dropped support several years ago. The Intel ISEF is the premier science competition in the world exclusively for students in grades 9–12.

“We can readily identify dozens of STEM students in these counties who meet basic qualifications to compete to attend the Intel ISEF,” said Lynn Elfner, director of The Ohio Academy of Science.

“None of the tens of millions of STEM education dollars being spent in Ohio has provided opportunities for these ‘best and brightest’ students. The quickest way to level the playing field is to support these students with a modest annual appropriation of \$100,000 that would nearly double Ohio’s participation by next year in the Intel ISEF from approximately 24 students to approximately 48 students, a feat that would not go unnoticed internationally,” he continued.

Going from good to great

According to the Academy, \$100,000 per year would move Ohio from 8th place to 3rd place in the world, exceeded only by Florida and New York. It would take only \$2.5 million per year to be number one internationally in student participation.

“This is a cost effective way to go from good to great,” remarked Elfner.

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Again this year students in metropolitan areas like Mansfield, Toledo, and Youngstown and in extensive rural areas were shut out of competition because the State of Ohio did not support them. Even fewer students may attend next year unless new funds are found.

“For only \$100,000 a year the rest of Ohio’s best and brightest STEM students could have the opportunity to compete,” remarked Mr. Lynn Elfner, CEO of The Ohio Academy of Science. “These funds would support teacher and student training costs, affiliation and meeting fees and travel costs for up to 20 additional students, nearly doubling Ohio’s presence internationally,” he continued.

Don't reinvent the wheel

According to the Academy, this would be a perfect use of Governor Strickland’s “celebrate academic achievement” funds. “We don’t necessarily need new academic competitions; we need to fully fund what is already in place and extend those opportunities to students in ALL Ohio counties,” said Elfner.

“We also need assistance to continue the programs that have been working and sending students to ISEF,” Elfner continued.

The Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (Intel ISEF), the world’s largest international pre-college science competition, annually provides a forum for more than 1,500 high school students from over 50 countries to showcase their independent research.

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Editor's notes:

1. Please see enclosed Ohio map. An Adobe Illustrator® or tiff file of this map is available. Please email request to oas@iwaynet.net
2. Link to Intel ISEF media webpage:
<http://www.intel.com/pressroom/kits/events/isef2009/>

