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PBS INITIATIVE TO RECOGNIZE INNOVATIVE STEM EDUCATORS AND BEST PRACTICES

PBS Teachers® Innovation Challenge and NSTA’s Science Matters initiatives to improve science education announced at the White House ‘Educate to Innovate’ event

ARLINGTON, Va., Jan. 6, 2010 – [PBS](#) announced today a multi-year initiative to recognize innovative preK-12 educators and instructional practices that inspire and engage students in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). The effort was acknowledged at an event at the White House today marking the second phase of President Obama’s “[Educate to Innovate](#)” campaign that recognizes excellence in teaching.

“America’s leadership tomorrow depends on how we educate our students today, especially in science, math and engineering,” said President Obama. “That’s why I’m pleased to announce the expansion of our “Educate to Innovate” campaign today and applaud the several new partnerships launched that will help meet our goal of moving American students from the middle to the top of the pack in science and math achievement over the next decade.”

With its member stations, PBS is launching the annual PBS Teachers® Innovation Challenge (pbs.org/teachers/innovators/) later this month to honor and celebrate talented teachers, and showcase best practices in support of the growth and advancement of the teaching profession. NSTA is supporting the Challenge by encouraging participation of science teachers at every level of school and will recognize innovative STEM educators among the 50 Challenge winners that will be announced this spring.

The Teachers Innovation Challenge builds on an existing partnership between NSTA and PBS centered on Science Matters. Science Matters is an initiative by NSTA to increase public awareness of the importance of science education—especially at the elementary level—and improve school and community involvement in science.

PBS and its member stations are contributing to national and local events to help achieve the goals of the Science Matters campaign. Local PBS stations WGBH in Boston, Twin Cities Public Television in St. Paul, and ASSET, a department of KAET in Phoenix, sponsored events in late 2009 in conjunction with regional NSTA conferences with hands-on activities for students, parents and teachers. PBS Teachers also is organizing a Science Matters event during the NSTA 2010 National Conference in March to highlight the use of digital learning objects– video, audio, images, and interactive simulations – in the science classroom.

“Teachers are our inspiration to create high-quality media content and services as education is at the heart of PBS' mission. We want to recognize that those dedicated, passionate teachers are the leaders driving educational change and helping students reach their full potential,” said Paula Kerger, president and CEO for PBS. “We believe the examples set by these teachers will provide a model for others to emulate.”

“The pipeline for our next generation of scientists, engineers, and technicians begins in the K-6 classroom. Quality elementary science lessons capture children’s attention when they are most open, most curious, and most naturally disposed to asking questions about the world around them,” said Patricia Shane, Ph.D., president of the NSTA. “Young children who receive a strong foundation in science during their elementary school years do better in science in later grades. Many students also make fundamental career decisions by the time they get to middle school. This is why Science Matters and why science is so important to our youngest learners.”

To learn more about the PBS Teachers Innovation Challenge, go to pbs.org/teachers/innovators/. More information will be posted by Jan. 25. Entries will be accepted Jan. 25 to March 12. To learn more about Science Matters, go to sciencematters.nsta.org.

About PBS

PBS, with its 356 member stations, offers all Americans – from every walk of life – the opportunity to explore new ideas and new worlds through television and online content. Each month, PBS reaches more than 124 million people on-air and online, inviting them to experience the worlds of science, history, nature and public affairs; hear diverse viewpoints; and take front row seats to world-class drama and performances. PBS’ broad array of programs has been consistently honored by the industry’s most coveted award competitions. Teachers of children from pre-K through 12th grade turn to PBS for digital content and services that help bring classroom lessons to life. PBS’ premier children’s TV programming and Web site, pbskids.org, are parents’ and teachers’ most trusted partners in inspiring and nurturing curiosity and love of learning in children. More information about PBS is available at www.pbs.org, one of the leading dot-org Web sites on the Internet.

About NSTA

The Arlington, VA-based National Science Teachers Association (NSTA), www.nsta.org, is the largest professional organization in the world promoting excellence and innovation in science teaching and learning for all. NSTA's current membership includes more than 60,000 science teachers, science supervisors, administrators, scientists, business and industry representatives, and others involved in science education.

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