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Ohio STEM Learning Network Receives \$12 Million Investment to Launch Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Initiative

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to Help Support Statewide Collaboration, Providing More than 100,000 Ohio Students with a 21st Century Education

(COLUMBUS) – An unprecedented public-private partnership designed to train and connect more than 100,000 students to jobs in Ohio's 21st century economy today announced a \$12 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The investment—part of a \$50 million commitment by state and private partners—will support the launch of the Ohio Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Learning Network, to be managed by Battelle, the world's largest non-profit independent research and development organization. The network will begin with five regional STEM-based schools targeting low income and minority students. Ohio lawmakers also have targeted \$100 million for STEM college scholarships.

Governor Ted Strickland, Ohio Senate President Bill Harris and Ohio House Speaker Jon Husted gathered at Metro High School in Columbus with Battelle CEO Carl Kohrt, students, educators, public officials as well as business and community leaders to celebrate the unique partnerships that have been formed to nurture and grow Ohio's talent to compete and succeed in college and the workplace. The Ohio STEM Learning Network (OSLN), to be led by Rich Rosen, Battelle's Vice President for Education and Philanthropy, will work with Ohio's public schools to ensure that all students meet the STEM literacy challenge and are prepared to fill the high-quality jobs that will transform Ohio's economy from an industrial economy to a "solutions" economy.

"Today's businesses will succeed based on how well we solve problems like climate change, energy independence, high health care costs, and others. STEM literacy, with its emphasis on real-world problem-solving, gives students the intellectual as well as the technical foundation they need to make sense of the world around them and move ahead in this environment." Kohrt said. "Improving education is one of Battelle's founding purposes and operational signatures. As a business based on scientific discovery and application, we have a keen interest in vigorously promoting STEM education. This is what Ohio owes its children and it's what we must do to meet the Governor's commitment to open the doors of our colleges and adult career centers to an additional 230,000 Ohioans over the next decade."

The OSLN, in cooperation with the Ohio Partnership for Continued Learning, seeks to: double the number of college graduates in Ohio by 2015 with degrees in the STEM disciplines, with a special emphasis on increasing the number of low income and minority graduates; dramatically increase the number of individuals who choose a career in STEM fields to support Ohio's economic growth and ensure the state's position as a leader in innovation, research, and emerging technology; and design and implement a statewide infrastructure that ensures all secondary STEM school creation is aligned with Ohio's education reform, economic development, workforce, and two- and four-year higher education endeavors.

Governor Strickland, President Harris and Speaker Husted made the following joint statement: “We can all agree that creating jobs and building our economy are essential and vital to our progress as a state. To do so, we must prepare our students with the skills and tools needed to compete in the ever-changing global marketplace – an environment where talents in the STEM disciplines will drive the economy and dictate success. With Ohio’s focus on STEM education we are laying the groundwork for a highly competitive 21st century “solutions” revolution. We look forward to working with Battelle, the Ohio Business Roundtable, the Ohio Business Alliance for Higher Education and the Economy and the Ohio STEM Learning Network partners across the state on this bold initiative that will benefit Ohioans for years to come.”

AEP Chief Executive and Ohio Business Roundtable Chairman Michael Morris, one of many Ohio business leaders who have supported the development of OSLN and the state’s STEM learning initiatives, remarked, “Ohio’s greatest challenge is to cultivate and nurture the next generation of knowledge workers to fuel our innovation economy. The Roundtable is proud to join hands with Carl Kohrt and Battelle, our business, philanthropic and education partners, and Ohio’s elected leaders to ensure that STEM learning ‘sticks’ – that it thrives and becomes part of Ohio’s permanent education landscape.”

Metro High School in Columbus, a STEM school and the site of today’s announcement, opened its doors in the fall of 2006. According to Ronny Oppong, a sophomore at Metro, every day of school is a ‘WOW’ moment for him. “My curriculum is challenging with lots of advanced math and science. I’m discovering and inventing, but I’m also given opportunities to apply new ideas to problems in the real world,” Oppong said. “Learning is ‘hands-on’ and personal. And it’s not just math and science – there’s a lot of history, writing and literature, as well as music and the arts. If it were my decision, STEM would be part of every school.”

OSLN’s goal is to support schools’ efforts to inspire, train and connect more than 100,000 Ohio students over the next 10 years to the high-quality jobs that will define the state’s success in the global economy. “Our shared mission is to graduate all students ready for college, career and life,” said Steve Seleznow, Program Director of Education at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. “We are excited about the network of STEM schools that Ohio is creating and applaud the statewide commitment to link a challenging curriculum to the future vitality and prosperity of the state’s regional economies.”

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The Ohio STEM Learning Network (OSLN) is a privately-supported, non-profit initiative designed to advance high-quality STEM education for all students in Ohio. Managed by Battelle, and a team of affiliated entities, the OSLN will provide critical funding and technical assistance for the regional development of STEM-education initiatives that have a broad base of committed local partners and are aligned to the State of Ohio’s broader STEM goals and programs. Focused on innovative teaching and learning, its overarching goal is to create a growing network of connected and thriving STEM schools and programs. The result: student success in the 21st century “solutions” economy. Battelle’s Rich Rosen, Vice President for Education and Philanthropy, will lead the OSLN.

Battelle is the world’s largest non-profit independent research and development organization, providing innovative solutions to the world’s most pressing needs through its four global businesses: Laboratory Management, National Security, Energy Technology, and Health and Life Sciences. It advances scientific discovery and application by conducting \$4 billion in global R&D annually through contract research, laboratory management and technology commercialization. Headquartered in Columbus, Ohio, Battelle oversees 20,400 employees in more than 120 locations worldwide, including seven national laboratories which Battelle manages or co-manages for the U.S. Department of Energy and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Battelle also is one of the nation’s leading charitable trusts focusing on societal and economic impact and actively supporting and promoting science and math education.

*Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation** works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, it focuses on improving people’s health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, it seeks to ensure that all people—especially those with the fewest resources—have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life. Based in Seattle, the foundation is led by CEO Patty Stonesifer and co-chair William H. Gates Sr., under the direction of Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett.*

*The **Ohio Business Roundtable** is a partnership of the chief executives of the state’s major businesses who represent all sectors of the economy and are committed to working with public leaders to build a better Ohio. Its 501(c)(3) affiliate, the **Ohio Business Alliance for Higher Education and the Economy**, is coordinating the public policy, communications and engagement activities of the OSLN.*