

KSTF Names 34 New Teaching Fellows in 19 States

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Moorestown, NJ, June 4, 2012 – The Knowles Science Teaching Foundation today named 34 beginning high school teachers of biology, physical science and mathematics to its 2012 cohort of Teaching Fellows. The highly competitive five-year KSTF Teaching Fellowships, among the most comprehensive in the nation, were awarded to a diverse group of early-career teachers, including recent graduates from such top universities as Harvard, MIT and Stanford. The new Fellows include professionals who have left fledgling careers on Wall Street and in academic research to make an impact in America's classrooms. KSTF invests \$175,000 over five years in each Fellow to ensure that high-caliber beginning teachers remain in the profession.

"We cannot improve science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education without recruiting and keeping excellent STEM teachers in the profession," said Dr. Nicole Gillespie, KSTF's Director of Teaching Fellowships. "The 34 new Fellows join a growing cadre of exceptional KSTF teachers whose knowledge, commitment and leadership are transforming math and science education from the inside."

Nationally, nearly half of all new teachers leave the profession within the first five years; KSTF maintains a steady teacher retention rate of 95% over the five years of the fellowship. At a time when the nation's economic well-being is tied closer than ever to students' success in STEM, highly-effective, experienced teachers are a rarity. In 1987, the average teacher had 14 years of experience, according to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. In 2007, that number stood at just two years.

"Teacher turnover is a critical problem that's hurting our students and our communities, and costing taxpayers a great deal of money," said Dr. Gillespie.

“Instead of investing in the costly cycle of constantly hiring and training new teachers, we need to invest in keeping the best of the best in the teaching profession by providing them with ongoing support and professional development.”

“In order to better support students as they grow and explore the world around them, teachers need resources that extend beyond textbooks and lab supplies,” said Sophie Lambert, a 2012 KSTF Biology Fellow and graduate of Stanford’s Teacher Education program.

The 2012 KSTF Fellows are passionate about reaching students from diverse backgrounds with real-world approaches that make math and science relevant to their students’ lives and give them the confidence to succeed in high school, college and beyond. Over the next five years, the Fellows will take part in a multi-layered fellowship program that includes professional and leadership development, teaching tools and materials, and access to a network of like-minded colleagues nationwide. The program is explicitly designed to meet the needs of beginning teachers from the onset of the credentialing process through the critical early years of their careers, when talented STEM teachers are in the greatest danger of leaving the field.

“At KSTF, we can work together to create a movement in which students become lovers of the STEM field and explore careers in math and science,” said Emma Vierheller, a 2012 KSTF Mathematics Fellow now earning her teaching credential at Marquette University.

KSTF awarded its first four Teaching Fellowships in 2002. Today there are over 200 Teaching Fellows and alumni in 40 states. Since the program’s inception, KSTF Fellows have taught more than 150,000 students.