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## **Arkansas Receives \$13 Million Grant for Math, Science Education**

LITTLE ROCK, Aug. 30, 2007) – Governor Mike Beebe today announced that Arkansas is one of only seven states to receive money from a new grant designed to further build upon improvements in Advanced Placement (AP) scores by Arkansas students.

Created by the National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI), the \$13.2 million six-year grant will fund training and incentive programs for AP and Pre-AP courses to better prepare students for college-level work in math, science and engineering. Exxon Mobil Corporation is the primary supporter of the grants, committing \$125 million to the project.

“This is a unique opportunity for Arkansas, and we will take full advantage of the NMSI grant to further push for excellence in education,” Beebe said. “This resource will help our students continue to make great strides in our involvement and achievement in Advanced Placement courses.”

“The response NMSI has received from across the country has been remarkable,” said Tom Luce, President and CEO of NMSI. “Their interest in our approach tells me they believe in the potential of NMSI and are eager to improve math and science performance.”

“ExxonMobil invests in people and communities around the world because we believe that meeting the world’s economic, energy and environmental challenges requires the development of the world’s most powerful natural resource – the human mind,” said Rex Tillerson, Chairman and CEO of Exxon Mobil Corporation. “By focusing on programs that are proven to be effective, NMSI holds great promise in fostering the next generation of scientists and engineers.”

Arkansas will establish a nonprofit organization based at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, which authored Arkansas’s successful grant proposal, to utilize the grant at high schools in approximately 20 districts around the state, with the potential to expand to more schools in the future. The primary goal will be to increase the number of AP students who score three or higher on their AP English, math and science exams each

year. The AP grant will include extensive training of teachers, identification and cultivation of lead teachers, additional time on task for students, and financial incentives based on academic results.

Tommie Sue Anthony of Conway, former coordinator of UALR's Arkansas Advanced Placement Professional Development Center, is president of the new organization, Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math and Science (AAIMS).

Between 2002 and 2006, Arkansas led the nation with a 15.5 percent per-capita growth in the number of students passing math, science and English AP exams.

"We look forward to continued improvement in these areas, and this grant from NMSI will enhance our efforts to increase the rigor and relevance of Arkansas high school math and science courses," said Ken James, Arkansas Commissioner of Education.

Launched in March 2007, NMSI was developed in response to the call for action by the National Academies' 2005 blue ribbon panel report, *Rising Above the Gathering Storm*. According to the panel of 20 experts, improving American students' performance in math and science coursework is the most effective way to increase the United State's global competitiveness. Exxon Mobil Corporation announced its support for the initiative, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation have also joined as funders.

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