



# NEWS

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## **Innovative Award Provides N.C. Science and Mathematics Teachers with Support**

RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, N.C. -- A new grant program that will support and encourage the work of science and mathematics teachers in North Carolina has been launched by the Burroughs Wellcome Fund and the North Carolina State Board of Education.

The Career Awards for Science and Mathematics Teachers will provide \$175,000 over a period of five years (\$35,000 per year), as well as professional development opportunities, to recipients selected from eligible teachers in the North Carolina K-12 public school system.

"The Burroughs Wellcome Fund knows that having great teachers is the key to turning out great students," said North Carolina Governor Bev Perdue. "Their commitment to enhancing the science and math teaching professions in our state is important. As we face uncertain economic times, it's critical for the private sector to partner with us to move forward in education and provide 21st century teachers for our students."

The award will recognize teachers who demonstrate solid knowledge of science or mathematics content and have outstanding performance records in educating children. Recipients will receive professional development and opportunities to collaborate with other master science and mathematics teachers who will serve as mentors. In addition, schools and school districts will benefit by having their teachers become fully developed leaders in their field.

"These awards will help develop the careers of the professionals who instruct the future leaders of our communities," John Burris, Ph.D., BWF president. "By using science and mathematics as a benchmark we hope to encourage the advancement of the teaching profession."

The State Board of Education will provide additional salary support to school districts that will allow award recipients to have a 12-month contract. This innovative program is made possible by a unique public and private partnership and is significant in increasing the pool of prominent teachers in North Carolina's classrooms.

"The Career Awards for Science and Mathematics Teachers are key to opening opportunities for many teachers across the state who are committed to proven innovative, global instruction in North Carolina classrooms," said State Board of Education Chair Howard Lee. "We look forward to working with these award winning teachers and embrace the potential of advancing effective teaching that aligns with our efforts."

For the past decade, BWF has been instrumental in supporting informal science education programs across North Carolina. In keeping with BWF's emphasis on promoting the career development of individual scientists, BWF is expanding from funding primarily informal science education programs to investing in individual teachers.

"An essential component of improving students' abilities in these critical subjects is to have teachers who have both superb content knowledge and teaching skills," said Carr Thompson, who heads the science education program at BWF. "These teachers will serve as role models to awaken students' passion for science and mathematics."

The National Academies report *Rising Above the Gathering Storm*, highly recommends strengthening the skills of K-12 science and mathematics teachers. The Washington-based Business-Higher Education Forum estimates that over the next decade, schools in America will need 200,000 or more new teachers in science and mathematics.

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#### **ABOUT THE FUND**

The Burroughs Wellcome Fund is an independent, private foundation dedicated to advancing the medical sciences by supporting research and other scientific and educational activities. A majority of its grantmaking is made through competitive programs designed to support the career development of young scientists and to build capacity in undervalued research areas. For more information about the Fund, contact Russ Campbell, Communications Officer, at 919-991-5119 or visit our web site at <http://www.bwffund.org>.