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**Ohio Mathematics and Science Coalition to Unveil Vision
For Improving Mathematics and Science Education in Ohio**

Today at noon at the Statehouse in Columbus, the Ohio Mathematics and Science Coalition (OMSC) unveils “Finding the Solution: A Call for Collaboration.” This document details a new vision for Ohio’s mathematics and science education system that calls for a collaborative, systemic, and sustainable change. This vision is based on five bold strategies that, collectively, are designed to fundamentally change the way mathematics and science are taught and learned in Ohio. These changes will bring Ohio into the 21st century by assuring that all students will be engaged in learning mathematics and science. The Coalition’s commissioned efforts show that students under the guidance of properly trained and supported teachers can become literate in mathematics and science.

OMSC is an independent advocacy group comprised of representatives from education, business and public sectors, as well as private citizens, working with the common goal of revitalization and improvement of mathematics, science, and technology education, from preschool to beyond graduate school. Its mission is to lead and assist collaborative efforts statewide to achieve continuous, systemic and sustainable improvements in the mathematics and science education system serving all of Ohio’s approximately 1.83 million students.

“Finding the Solution” is written to all Ohioans. It recognizes individual efforts by professional organizations, state agencies, government and institutions, but calls for collaboration as the way to make a difference.

“The key to Ohio’s mathematics and science education is the collective wisdom of all,” the document states. “This document is a Call for Collaboration across sectors. The time to work together to maximize the success of our students is NOW.”

The vision is a system of math and science education that encourages and motivates all students to learn math and science at school, at home and in the community. The five priorities for change are:

1. Implement learning standards that are research-based and professionally recommended.
2. Implement research-based curriculum and assessments.
3. Empower qualified teachers who are provided in adequate numbers and supported by the necessary resources.
4. Commit to shared accountability by students, parents, the public, the legislature, the governor, the state agencies and all education communities.
5. Align the system of standards, curriculum, instruction, assessments and accountability measures.

According to a 2001 University of Cincinnati survey, 92 percent of Ohioans believe mathematics has value in the workplace and the economy while 82 percent believe science has value in the workplace and the economy. Yet, according to the National Center for Public Policy in Higher Education, Ohio earned only a C+ for how much mathematics and science training students get before college and how well they score on advanced placement and college entrance exams.

The bottom line – Ohio’s mathematics and science education system is not providing all students with the math and science knowledge and skills they need to be successful in today’s technology-driven, knowledge-based society.

The OMSC advocates that improvements can be achieved through collaborative efforts to provide:

- greater access for students to curricula based on the knowledge and skills needed in the new century,
- more opportunities for teachers to acquire and apply the best research-based practices in their classrooms,
- increased expectations for learning and for closing the achievement gap for all students, and
- policy and resource allocations aligned with identified needs.

According to the immediate past Chair of OMSC and the team leader of the document drafting effort, Dr. William Steenken, the unique thing about this document, and something Ohio should feel good about, is that over 53 individuals and organizations reviewed and helped shape the document. By the

time it went to press, twenty-three Ohio agencies and professional organizations supported the document. Further, the Five Priorities for Change and the supporting recommendations are not edicts from the top. They are the results of research and have been agreed upon by a wide group of stakeholders who are close to and in the trenches where the changes ultimately have to take place and be institutionalized. This is viewed as an outstanding show of collaboration.

Janet Herrelko, University of Dayton Assistant Professor of Mathematics Education and chair of OMSC agrees with Steenken. She believes that “the key to Ohio’s mathematics and science education is the collective wisdom of all. This document is a call for collaboration across sectors. The time to work together to maximize the success of Ohio students is NOW!”

David Kullman, Professor of Mathematics and Statistics at Miami University states that “This document presents a vision for mathematics and science education that will place Ohio among the nation’s leading states in terms of excellent teach and learning of these essential subjects.”

Ed Palmer, Principal of Central Crossing High School said that “Mathematics and science education across the state will benefit from the efforts of the Ohio Mathematics and Science Coalition, as the coalition emphasizes alignment of standards, curricula and assessments grounded in research and based on the recommendations of professionals in the field.”

“OMSC’s vision is an important step in focusing the efforts of all Ohioans on improving the quality of mathematics and science education” Ken Switzer, Deputy Director of Labor Relations for the Ohio School Boards Association stated.

“The Ohio Council of Teachers of Mathematics supports this document because it will help with the alignment of mathematics and science curricula with the assessments. The curricula will also be raised to higher levels. Ultimately this positively affects the mathematics and science learning of the children in Ohio” says Linda Taylor, President of Ohio Council of Teachers of Mathematics.

Ed Bischoff, President of Bishoff and Associates states “The vision of OMSC is to encourage and motivate all students to learn the mathematics and science knowledge and skills to be successful in today’s technological society.”

As the incoming President of the National Alliance of State Science and Mathematics Coalitions, Steenken, a retired engineer from GE Aircraft Engines in Cincinnati, makes the following additional points: “Ohio is unique. I know of no other state where a vision for mathematics and science education has been developed, much less with buy-in from such a wide group of stakeholders.”

Steenken went on to explain that as industry knows, once you have a group of people agreeing on a starting place, it is then possible to develop more areas of consensus as specific actions are developed and implemented. This is how the Coalition intends to proceed in its efforts to advocate for and facilitate the improvement of mathematics and science education in Ohio.