



National Science Foundation

Directorate for Education and Human Resources
Division of Undergraduate Education
4201 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, Virginia 22230

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Dear Participant:

We at the National Science Foundation welcome you to the 2012 Math and Science Partnership (MSP) Learning Network Conference. Our theme for this year is Framing Effective Teaching in STEM. This theme focuses on teachers and teaching, certainly central elements in K-12 schools and institutions of higher education as well as one of the most important leverage points for MSP projects. Three related strands were developed to organize breakout sessions at the conference.

One strand focuses on coming to common definitions around effective teaching at K-12 and postsecondary levels. Nationally, there are very active scholarly and policy-focused discussions on this definition, with significant portions of the debate judging teacher effectiveness through the lens of student outcomes. This, then, has led to value-added notions being considered for the valuation of inservice teachers as well as for the evaluation of the teacher preparation programs that develop preservice teachers. In this year's conference, we encourage you to be clear about such definitions within the context of your MSP work. After you have a definition, the conference's second strand asks you to consider the efforts of your partnership to prepare and support teachers and faculty to teach effectively. What strategies are you using at both K-12 and postsecondary levels, and what are the intellectual bases for these strategies? Finally, the conference's third strand asks MSP projects to defend their approaches towards effective STEM teaching through demonstrations of evidence. Connecting the dots between partnership-developed interventions, influences on teachers who grow in their content and pedagogical knowledge, and effective teaching is not an easy task. It is only through continual reflection on all aspects of this work – definition, intellectual bases for the work and research designs – that MSP projects will be able to contribute to the national dialogue on what is effective teaching. I urge you all to engage in this important conversation during and after this year's Learning Network Conference, including broadening the discussion to include your entire partnership through the virtual poster hall that will commence in a few weeks.

We thank the members of the 2012 Conference Planning Committee and the LNC Organizing Committee, including colleagues at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and the University of Massachusetts Boston, who have assisted us in organizing and focusing this meeting. Our appreciation goes to the Conference speakers; MSP project team members who have graciously agreed to share their work at this meeting; and our colleagues at the U. S. Department of Education who, with their state MSP efforts, broaden our collective work. Most importantly, we thank you for your participation. Your expertise and investment of time, your leadership in your projects, and your willingness to share what you are learning continue to be critical to advancing our effort to improve STEM teaching and learning for the Nation's students.

Have a great meeting!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James E. Hamos".

James E. Hamos
MSP Team Leader
Math and Science Partnership