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For Immediate Release

## State of Ohio Restores Funding for the *Believe in Ohio* Program

***Believe in Ohio* creates a “Culture of Innovation” in Ohio’s high schools and an “Innovation Pathway” between Ohio’s high schools and Ohio’s colleges and universities.**

Columbus and Cleveland (August 21, 2019) ... ***The Ohio Academy of Science and Entrepreneurial Engagement Ohio are pleased to announce that the State of Ohio is providing \$2 million in funding to re-launch the Believe in Ohio program.***

*Believe in Ohio* is a free, comprehensive, experiential learning STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) entrepreneurship and innovation program for Ohio high school students that was collaboratively developed by The Ohio Academy of Science (OAS) and Entrepreneurial Engagement Ohio (EEO).

Originally launched in 2013 with funding from the State of Ohio, during the years 2014-2016, the program included over 300 teachers at more than 150 high schools in 50+ Ohio counties, with more than 10,000 students developing STEM Commercialization and STEM Business Plans for entry into local high school competitions. More than \$1.2 million in cash awards and scholarships to Ohio colleges and universities were awarded to winners of *Believe in Ohio* state competitions during those years.

In addition, since 2014, more than 8,000 students and teachers have attended one of 43 STEM Entrepreneurship & Innovation Forums held at seventeen colleges and universities across Ohio. Students who attended Forums participated in an extraordinary program that opened their eyes to the future and inspired them to “think outside the box”. At the end of each Forum, students working in teams were given an opportunity to “pitch” their innovative product ideas and problem-solving solutions to their peers.

Due to 2017-2018 state budget shortfalls, *Believe in Ohio* did not receive continued funding and had to be suspended. However, with state funding restored in the recently approved state budget, the *Believe in Ohio* program is being relaunched for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years.

“We look forward to giving Ohio high school students essentially the same opportunity to participate in local high school STEM Commercialization and Business Plan competitions with competition awards as we did in prior years”, said John Klipfell, Entrepreneurial Engagement Ohio Executive Director and *Believe in Ohio* Co-Director. “Qualifying students will also have an opportunity to participate in regional and state STEM Plan competitions in which hundreds of thousands of dollars in scholarships to Ohio colleges and universities will be awarded.”

“*Believe in Ohio* will also be conducting a series of STEM Entrepreneurship and Innovation Forums this Fall at a wide range of colleges and universities throughout Ohio,” added Klipfell. “Specific details on how STEM and business/economics teachers and their students can participate in these *Believe in Ohio* programs will be available in mid-September,” continued Klipfell.

According to Michael Woytek, Ohio Academy of Science Executive Director and *Believe in Ohio* Co-Director:

- “*Believe in Ohio* addresses the question that students always ask, ‘Why do I need to learn about this stuff, anyway?’ Through self-discovery, *Believe in Ohio* provides students with a sense of purpose and direction for considering their post-secondary education and career opportunities.”
- “*Believe in Ohio* encourages students to become life-long learners, emphasizes the importance of STEM, and the need to develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills and an entrepreneurial mindset, that are necessary to compete in today’s Innovation Economy.”

Arguably, more than any other person in Ohio, Angela McMurry has her finger on the pulse of what’s happening in Ohio’s STEM classrooms. Ms. McMurry is a high school biology teacher at Arcanum High School in Darke County and immediate Past-President of the 1,500-member Science Education Council of Ohio. Ms. McMurry, who also serves on the Executive Board of The Ohio Academy of Science and was formerly the Lead STEM Advocate for the *Believe in Ohio* program, offered the following comments.

“When *Believe in Ohio* existed throughout the state”, said Ms. McMurry, “I was able to see excitement in the classroom. I saw classrooms embracing creativity and innovation instead of drudging through canned labs, activities and projects. I witnessed students from small rural towns having a vision of college and an advanced future that would not have been the case before. Their ideas and dreams no longer had to stay silent in their minds simply because of their location in Ohio”

While the State of Ohio has done much over the years to develop Ohio’s Innovation Economy through the *Third Frontier* program, much more needs to be done to make Ohio’s high school students and parents aware of the many benefits and incentives for them to continue their educations and build their careers in Ohio,” added Mr. Woytek.

“For example, one of the incentives to encourage high school students to make their futures in our state is the recently and greatly expanded [Choose Ohio First STEM scholarship program](#),” continued Woytek. “The *Believe in Ohio* program helps students understand what they need to do to prepare themselves for the future and why Ohio is a great place to continue their educations and build their careers”, added Woytek.

**While specific details on how Ohio’s STEM and business/economics teachers and their students can participate in the *Believe in Ohio* program will be available in mid-September, educators who wish to receive advance information about participating in the program are encouraged to email [BelieveInOhio@ohiosci.org](mailto:BelieveInOhio@ohiosci.org)**

**Special thanks to our legislative Champions Rep. Jay Edwards, Sen. Matt Dolan, Speaker Householder and Senate President Obhof, and Governor DeWine, for their work to restore this beneficial program.**

#### **About The Ohio Academy of Science:**

With more than 1,400 members and a network of thousands of supporters and volunteers, since 1891, The Ohio Academy of Science has been promoting science and science education in Ohio as a membership based, volunteer-driven, not-for-profit organization. In addition to its pre-college student programs (District and State Science Day and *Believe in Ohio*) the Academy conducts an annual meeting which brings together scientists and students from all disciplines across the state and publishes an international, multidisciplinary, scientific journal. [www.ohiosci.org](http://www.ohiosci.org)

#### **About Entrepreneurial Engagement Ohio:**

Entrepreneurial Engagement Ohio (EEO) is a 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Corporation formed for the educational and charitable purpose of promoting student and community awareness as to the challenges and opportunities the changing regional, national and global economies present for the future. It provides educational instruction, curriculum, mentoring and other information that help develop the entrepreneurial, economic, business, and scientific literacy of students and the community that will be needed for the 21st Century. [www.EEOhio.org](http://www.EEOhio.org)