



Contact: Mr. Michael Woytek, *Believe in Ohio* Co-Director, 614-389-2182, mwoytek@ohiosci.org,
Mr. John Klipfell, *Believe in Ohio* Co-Director, 440-821-2357, JKlipfell1@aol.com

Enhanced *Believe in Ohio* Program Rolled Out for the 2020-2021 School Year

- In response to the pandemic, enhanced program will work in any learning environment.
- Up to \$2,500 in student competition cash awards and \$300-\$500 in teacher support grants available to participating high school teachers for their students.
 - Home school and remote learning students are encouraged to participate.
- Includes a new Statewide STEM Innovation & Entrepreneurship Scholarship program.

Columbus and Cleveland (September 9, 2020) ... Funded by the State of Ohio through the Ohio Department of Higher Education, the *Believe in Ohio* program is part of the Ohio High School STEM Innovation and Ohio College Scholarship and Retention Program.

It is the objective of the *Believe in Ohio* program to create a “Culture of Innovation” in Ohio high schools and to encourage students to continue their educations and careers in Ohio by providing college scholarships to Ohio colleges and universities. It accomplishes this by focusing on the practical application of STEM and related fields and the development of an entrepreneurial mindset and critical thinking skills students will need in the future.

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 and Entrepreneurial Engagement Ohio. *Believe in Ohio's* personalized, student-centered learning experience allows students to explore their own areas of interest and teaches them how to commercialize solutions to problems by developing a STEM Commercialization Plan or STEM Business Plan.

***Believe in Ohio's* enhanced and expanded program will work in any learning environment:**

The past school year presented a great challenge to teachers everywhere as they were suddenly faced with the need to develop quality online programming for their students. In response, *Believe in Ohio* substantially enhanced and expanded their programming to ensure that it will work in any learning environment they might face during the course of the upcoming school year, whether it be in-class, remote or blended. Among the many enhancements, *Believe in Ohio* provides each participating teacher with their own personalized Google Classroom that includes an extensive and comprehensive array of teaching and learning resources, including an expanded number of student videos, and a Design Thinking / Ideation Mini-Course that can help students develop their problem solving skills. <https://believeinohio.org/teacher-info/>

Believe in Ohio provides up to \$2,500 in student competition cash awards and \$300-\$500 in teacher support grants to participating high school teachers:

Not only is its curriculum free to teachers, the *Believe in Ohio* program provides up to \$2,500 in student competition cash awards and, new this year, \$300-\$500 in teacher support grants to high school teachers who complete a Memorandum of Understanding to participate. <https://believeinohio.org/teachers-need-to-know/>

Home school, independent and remote learning students are encouraged to participate in the program:

Recognizing that many more parents are home schooling their students in whole or in part this year, *Believe in Ohio* has enhanced its programming to allow independent and home school students, and students whose school or teacher is not otherwise participating in the program, and who aspires to be an innovator, to participate in the *Believe in Ohio* program this year. <https://believeinohio.org/independent-students/>

Believe in Ohio new Statewide STEM Innovation & Entrepreneurship Scholarship program:

All Ohio high school students, who are juniors or seniors during the 2020-2021 school year, and who meet the qualifications noted on the scholarship application, are invited to apply for a \$1,000 *Believe in Ohio* STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math) Scholarship. The purpose of this scholarship program is to recognize students throughout Ohio for their contributions to STEM Innovation and Entrepreneurship. To ensure that students from all parts of Ohio receive recognition, at least one \$1,000 scholarship will be awarded in each of Ohio’s ninety-nine State House of Representative districts, and thirty-three Ohio State Senate districts. <https://believeinohio.org/scholarships/>

Teachers, parents, and students who want more information about *Believe in Ohio* are encouraged to visit the website at <https://believeinohio.org/> or contact the *Believe in Ohio* STEM Advocate in their region of the state. <https://believeinohio.org/contact-us/>



About 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). Funded by the State of Ohio through the Ohio Department of Higher Education, the *Believe in Ohio* program is part of the Ohio High School STEM Innovation and Ohio College Scholarship and Retention Program.

It is the objective of the *Believe in Ohio* program to create a “Culture of Innovation” in Ohio high schools and to encourage students to continue their educations and careers in Ohio by providing college scholarships to Ohio colleges and universities. It accomplishes this by focusing on the practical application of STEM and related fields and the development of an entrepreneurial mindset and critical thinking skills students will need in the future.

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 10,000 students and teachers have attended one of 53 STEM Entrepreneurship and Innovation Forums held at nineteen 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. Regrettably, however as a result of the pandemic, this facet of the *Believe in Ohio* program has had to be suspended through at least the Fall of 2020

Due to 2017-2018 state budget shortfalls, *Believe in Ohio* did not receive continued funding and had to be suspended. State funding was however restored in 2019 to provide funding for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years. Although the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic in early 2020 severely disrupted many of the elements

of the *Believe in Ohio* program during the 2019-2020 school year, the program has been enhanced and expanded for the 2020-2021 school year to allow it to work in any learning environment, including an in-class, remote, or blended learning environment. Scholarship opportunities have also been expanded for the 2020-2021 school year as discussed in the preceding news release.

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 (Regional and State Science Day science fairs, The Buckeye and Engineering Fair, 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

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