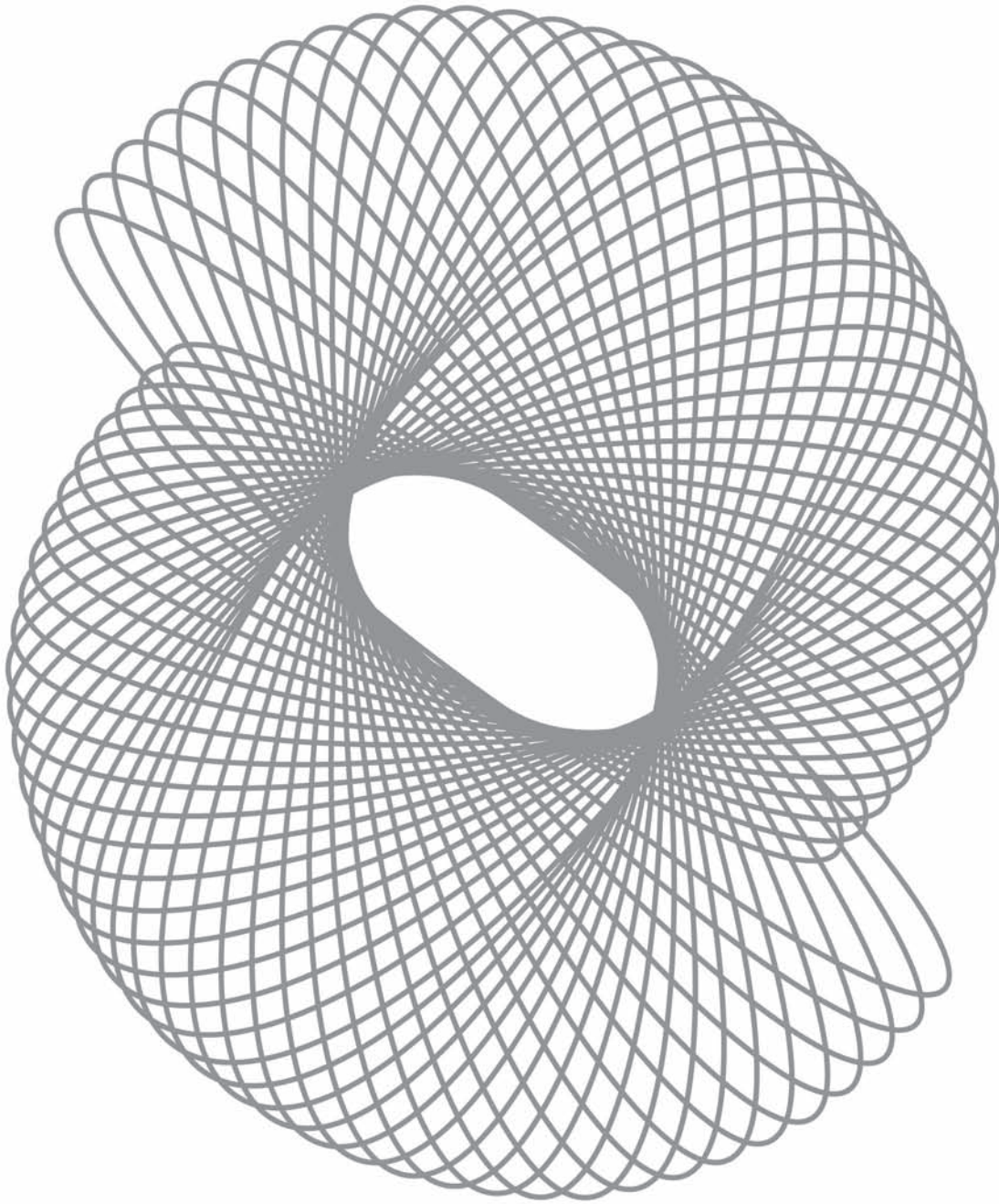


# LINKING LEADERS

Community for Change:

Celebrating Ten Years



nasa

science

technology

engineering

mathematics

education

nassmc

# LINKING LEADERS HISTORY

## **The Education Challenge**

In the mid 1990's, worrisome gaps were identified in the mathematical, scientific, and technological literacy of the U.S. population. Issues such as the under-representation of women and minorities in technical fields, student performance on international assessment instruments, and student readiness for the workplace emerged as critical weaknesses of the U.S. system. In conjunction, state educational standards for almost every subject became a nationwide trend.

## **The Perfect Partnership**

During this time, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Educational Office concluded that a monolithic, one-size-fits-all model was inappropriate and ineffective for supporting technical education across America. NASA's education leadership sought to support the source of a coherent voice for the states' improvement agendas.

The National Alliance of State Science and Mathematics Coalitions (NASSMC) provided NASA with the perfect partnership opportunity. Initially formed in 1994, NASSMC grew out of a project sponsored by the Mathematical Sciences Education Board of the National Research Council. The purpose of NASSMC was to bring state coalitions of business, education, and policy leaders under one national umbrella. NASSMC set out to develop strategies to strengthen existing coalitions while at the same time building new ones.

## **Linking Leaders Emerges**

The Linking Leaders program was established by NASA in collaboration with NASSMC. This partnership provided the ideal vehicle to support the separate and diverse reform efforts of individual state coalitions as a strategy for systemic change. NASA's commitment to education is based on the support of each state's education vision. If the sectors of education, state government, and business share a collective vision, then NASA resources can be aligned to support it. On the other hand, if education, policy, and business leaders are all working hard but at cross-purposes to improve education, then the vector sum of their efforts may be zero.

Linking Leaders for Systemic Reform was launched in 1995 and the first Linking Leaders Workshop was held in Cleveland, Ohio in 1996. With the assistance of NASA funding, NASSMC has extended the Linking Leaders program to twenty-three states. In addition to building new coalitions, the program has evolved in recent years to offer specialized support and technical assistance to the older, more well-established coalitions. Now called Linking Leaders for Systemic Improvement, the program has changed the dynamics of NASA's interaction with the states and has led directly to the establishment of coalitions in four states where no organization existed prior to the NASSMC/NASA presence.

From Linking Leaders I in 1996 to Linking Leaders IX in 2004, the program has been conducted in the states of Alabama, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

# NASSMC HISTORY

The National Alliance of State Science and Mathematics Coalitions (NASSMC) is an umbrella organization for state coalitions of business, education, and public policy leaders united for the improvement of mathematics, science, and technology education (MSTE) for all students. NASSMC is a network of thirty-seven state coalitions and serves as the national advocate for its member organizations.

## Vision and Goals

A non-profit association, NASSMC works state-by-state in pursuit of its vision that all U.S. students will have the necessary knowledge of, understanding of, and skills in mathematics, science, and technology, so they can be productive in their personal, work, and civic lives. The nation will have a competent and competitive workforce that continues to meet the challenges of the global economy. NASSMC's member coalitions work to bring coherence and added value to the separate efforts of many individuals and organizations. Coalitions pursue goals not achievable by any one organization or sector working alone. All Americans need and deserve to receive the best possible education in mathematics, science, and technology for their personal and civic lives.

To this end, NASSMC performs a variety of beneficial activities:

- Helping each coalition develop a state-specific strategy to improve mathematics, science, and technology education;
- Linking state coalition leaders to each other and to major national initiatives;
- Serving as the national ears and voice of its member coalitions;
- Providing a national forum for the discussion of critical issues relevant to continuous and systemic improvement of mathematics, science, and technology education; and
- Supporting timely dissemination of information relevant to the continuous and systemic improvement of mathematics, science, and technology education.

## NASSMC's Development

NASSMC evolved from a 1989 project of the Mathematical Sciences Education Board of the National Research Council. For five years, the project focused on developing coalitions of state-level leaders committed to promoting adaptation and implementation of new state standards for school mathematics and later, science based upon national models. In 1994, directors of the state coalitions initiated by the project decided to establish NASSMC as a national nonprofit organization with headquarters in Washington, DC. At the direction of its Board, NASSMC adopted a larger mission of supporting its member coalitions in the promotion of systemic improvement of mathematics, science, and technology education for all students in grades K-16.

In pursuit of its mission, NASSMC has designed and executed projects testing processes and materials for strengthening the structure and programs of its member coalitions. In collaboration with the Education Commission of the States and the NASA, it has developed a state-based model for working with business, education, and policy leaders to address continuous improvement in school mathematics, science, and technology. NASSMC also established the NASSMC Briefing Service, an Internet-based service providing leaders across the nation with concise and timely information about programs, research results, and public opinion relating to mathematics, science, and technology education.

In August of 2002, NASSMC moved its offices to the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) Building at 1840 Wilson Boulevard, in neighboring Arlington, Virginia. In this new location, NASSMC works in close proximity to the Triangle Coalition for Science and Technology Education and with the programs and operations of NSTA. The organization continues, through the efforts of its member coalitions, to support comprehensive and coordinated change in mathematics, science, and technology education and to promote public awareness and understanding of the need for such change.

2004

IL

## THE ILLINOIS MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ALLIANCE

The Illinois Mathematics, Science and Technology Alliance (IMSTA) joined NASSMC in August of 2003 and was selected for participation in the ninth round of the Linking Leaders program in 2004. Plans are underway for the coalition's initial Linking Leaders Conference.

### VITAL STATISTICS

Linking Leaders Class  
2004

Coalition Milestones  
Founded - 2003

1996

Ms

## MISSISSIPPI COALITION FOR MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The NASSMC/NASA-sponsored effort to build the Mississippi Coalition for Mathematics, Science and Technology (MCMST) started in 1996 with a tri-state conference entitled "Linking Leaders for Systemic Reform." A small existing coalition made the application for the Linking Leaders program and served as the nucleus for the creation of MCMST. The Mississippi Science Network, Inc. initiated a reorganization meeting in April of 1999, after which former Mississippi Governor William Winter agreed to lead the MCMST development.

### VITAL STATISTICS

Linking Leaders Class  
1996

Coalition Milestones  
Founded - 1999

MCMST received a grant from the Aerospace States Association (ASA), complemented with matching funds within Mississippi, which provided the means for a series of meetings that lead to the formal establishment of the Coalition. The Mississippi Science Network, Inc. was instrumental in obtaining these grants, serving as the fiscal agent, and providing leadership during the initial organizational efforts.

In September of 1999, Governor Winter furthered the re-organization efforts by convening a meeting of representatives from the State Department of Education, higher education, community colleges, economic development organizations, and The Mississippi Public Education Forum. Based on the consensus of this group, business and industry leaders were invited to a second meeting held in October of 1999. As a result of this second gathering, workforce development emerged as a major element of the coalition's action plan.

Currently, a formal structure is being proposed which would include leadership from those present at the meeting in October of 1999. In a recommendation to the governor, former Governor Winter has suggested the enhancement of the coalition to assume a role as an independent, non-government commission.

1999  
Ne

## NEBRASKA MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE COALITION

The Nebraska Mathematics and Science Coalition (NMSC) participated in the fourth Linking Leaders class. A number of alignment projects grew out of the Nebraska Linking Leaders effort and work with the NASA Aerospace Education Services Program in the state was increased. The NMSC gave birth to the Nebraska Mathematics and Science Initiative (NMSI). The NMSI developed into the Center for Science, Mathematics, and Computer Education supported by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and housed in the state museum on the Lincoln campus. The NMSI director became director of the Center. The Nebraska Mathematics and Science Coalition, faced with a lack of funds to support continued operation, disbanded in 2000. The work of the Center for Science, Mathematics and Computer Education continues.

The Nebraska Coalition is currently inactive.

### VITAL STATISTICS

Linking Leaders Class  
1999

2001

Pa

## PENNSYLVANIA DELEGATION

Pennsylvania entered the Linking Leaders program in 2001 with Linking Leaders VI. A design team was formed and a workshop was conducted in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania in the Fall of 2003 with leadership from Pennsylvania's business, education and public policy sectors in attendance. Planning for follow-up activity continues.

### VITAL STATISTICS

Linking Leaders Class  
2001

1997

Wa

## WASHINGTON DELEGATION

Representatives from the state of Washington met at the Maritime Institute in Maryland in 1997 as part of Linking Leaders II. No coalition was formed from that effort. However, progress was made - through the Washington Department of Education - in integrating NASA resources and aligning them with state standards. Conversations continue between NASSMC and the business and policy leaders in Washington, about the prospect of establishing a coalition.

### VITAL STATISTICS

Linking Leaders Class  
1997



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