



Believe in Ohio

News Release

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The Ohio Academy of Science Announces *Believe in Ohio* Program for the 2021-2022 School Year

Multi-faceted program helps develop student innovators

Columbus, Ohio (September 8, 2021) ... Funded by the State of Ohio through the Ohio Department of Higher Education, the goal of the *Believe in Ohio* program is to create a “Culture of Innovation” in Ohio high schools and middle 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. The *Believe in Ohio* program is part of the Ohio High School STEM Innovation and Ohio College Scholarship and Retention Program.

Believe in Ohio is a multi-faceted program that helps develop student innovators. It is a comprehensive, free, experiential learning STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), entrepreneurship and innovation program for Ohio high school and middle school students. It 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.

“We are pleased to announce that the State of Ohio has continued funding of the *Believe in Ohio* program and that this important and timely program is once again available to STEM and business/economics teachers and students across the state,” stated Michael Woytek, Executive Director of the Ohio Academy of Science and Co-Director of the *Believe in Ohio* program. “Following the unprecedented level of disruption that has impacted Ohio’s education system during the last two school years, creating a culture of innovation in our schools is more important than ever,” continued Woytek.

The *Believe of Ohio* program includes the following program elements:

Local High School Student STEM Plan Competitions and Awards:

High school students have an opportunity to develop a STEM Commercialization Plan or a STEM Business Plan for entry into a local high school competition. Teachers are granted the flexibility to have their students develop their STEM plans based on what works for them and their classroom schedule. Depending on the number of student plans completed, *Believe in Ohio* will provide from \$300 to \$2,500 in funding for student competition awards. Participating teachers are also eligible to receive \$300 to \$500 in teacher support grants.

Local Middle School Student STEM Plan Competitions and Awards:

Middle School students also have an opportunity to develop a Middle School STEM Commercialization Plan or STEM Business Plan for entry into a local middle school competition. Recognizing that the academic character and maturity of middle school students will vary, middle school teachers are granted much flexibility as to how to instruct their

students. Depending on the number of student plans completed, *Believe in Ohio* will provide from \$100 to \$500 in student competition awards. Teachers are also eligible to receive \$300 to \$500 in teacher support grants.

Qualifying High School STEM Plan Competitions and Scholarship Opportunities:

High school STEM Plans that receive certain judged high scores in their local high school competitions may be invited to participate in a second level qualifying competition which may qualify them to also compete in a state competition. During the 2021-2022 school year, there will be two Qualifying Competitions, one in the middle of and one at the end of the school year. Up to one hundred STEM plans will be entered into a State STEM Plan Competition, with each awarded a \$1,000 scholarship to any Ohio college, university, post-secondary career center or vocational school.

State STEM Plan Competition and Scholarship Opportunities:

A potential third level of competition for high school students is the *Believe in Ohio* State STEM Plan Competition, which will be held in June 2022. Up to one hundred STEM Plans may qualify for the State Competition at one of the Qualifying Competitions and will compete for twenty-five \$10,000 scholarships and twenty-five \$5,000 scholarships to any Ohio college, university post-secondary career centers or vocational school.

Statewide STEM Innovation and Entrepreneurship Recognition Scholarship Program:

In addition to the \$475,000 in scholarships that *Believe in Ohio* plans to award at this school year's Qualifying and State STEM Plan Competitions, all Ohio high school students, who are juniors or seniors during the 2021-2022 school year, and who meet the qualifications, are invited to apply for one of one hundred and thirty-two \$1,000 *Believe in Ohio* STEM Innovation and Entrepreneurship Recognition Scholarships. The purpose of this scholarship program is to recognize students throughout Ohio for their contributions to STEM Innovation and Entrepreneurship by awarding a \$1,000 scholarship in each of Ohio's ninety-nine State House of Representative districts, and thirty-three Ohio State Senate districts. More information about this year's program and how to apply will be made available soon.

Extensive, Free Portfolio of Teacher and Student Curriculum Resources and Teacher Professional Development Opportunities:

Believe in Ohio provides an extensive, free curriculum and a comprehensive array of teacher and student program support materials, instruction booklets, STEM Plan templates, and a Design Thinking / Ideation Mini-Course that can help students develop their problem-solving skills. The curriculum includes more than fifty recommended and optional videos and printed resources that are also available to participating STEM and Business/Economics teachers in their own personalized Google Classrooms. <https://believeinohio.org/teacher-info/>

Believe in Ohio also makes available a number of professional development opportunities whereby teachers may obtain Contact Hour Credit and/or Graduate Course Credit. More information about this year's professional development program and how to signup will be made available soon.

"*Believe in Ohio* has enhanced and expanded its curriculum to ensure that it can support teachers and students in any learning environment that they might face during the coming school year, whether it be an in-school, remote or blended learning format," stated John Klipfell, Executive Director of Entrepreneurial Engagement and *Believe in Ohio* Co-Director. "In our view, *Believe in Ohio* has created one of the most comprehensive and teacher supportive STEM Entrepreneurship & Innovation programs in the country," continued Klipfell.

Believe in Ohio STEM Advocate Support Network:

Believe in Ohio has a network of regional STEM Advocates to help teachers implement the program, answer questions, and provide support to participating teachers. Recognizing that many students are home schooled and that other students may wish to independently participate in the *Believe in Ohio* program, STEM Advocates are also available to assist these students. <https://believeinohio.org/independent-students/>

Teachers, parents, and students who wish to know more 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 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