


# Governor, STEM Council Announce New Recognition Program for Teaching Excellence

*Cash Awards, Statewide Symposium Planned for Winners*

**Dover** – Standing in a science laboratory at Dover High School today, Governor Jack Markell and the leaders of the Delaware STEM Council, a group that he founded, announced a new annual award program designed specifically to recognize top teachers in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

The STEM Educator Awards are being made available to a Delaware teacher or team of teachers, at both the secondary and elementary school levels, who demonstrate STEM innovation and excellence through teaching, academic collaboration, and student engagement. A total of two unrestricted \$7500 cash awards will be given to those selected, and the individual or team will be highlighted in a statewide STEM symposium to be held in the summer of 2014. Educators or teams of educators can either apply or be nominated for the awards.

This year's funding is made possible through a cash donation from Ashland, Incorporated, a specialty chemical and  technology company with offices in Delaware.

The Governor previewed the initiative in his State of the State address in January, saying, "Many jobs of the future will be in these STEM fields. But we have trouble recruiting and retaining talented STEM teachers who have more lucrative options."

In a report released last year, the Delaware STEM Council noted that in Delaware, 3.8 jobs are open in the STEM fields for every unemployed worker, while there are 1.7 unemployed workers for every available non-STEM related job.

“Under the outstanding leadership of Teri Quinn Gray and Jud Wagner, the STEM Council has made important strides in working to better prepare our students for quality jobs by partnering with businesses, encouraging young people to pursue STEM education, and creating teacher training opportunities,” said Governor Markell. “But all of these efforts are only successful because of hardworking educators who are committed to creating innovative and engaging programs in their classrooms while collaborating to help each other implement the best lesson plans.

“These awards will highlight the very best of those efforts and, most importantly, allow other teachers and schools districts throughout the state to replicate successful programs and strategies.”

Applications and submission requirements are now available on the Delaware STEM Council web site ([www.delawarestem.org](http://www.delawarestem.org)). Among other criteria, entrants will be judged on their ability to integrate lessons across the various elements of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics); and implement innovative, “Out of the box” strategies that can be shared and adopted at other schools.

The submission deadline for all materials is June 15, 2014. Those selected for recognition will receive the unrestricted cash prize and will be featured in a statewide symposium later this summer.

“We are grateful to Ashland and thrilled to be able to recognize some of the Delaware educators who contribute so much to our students and their profession,” said Teri Quinn Gray, Co-Chair of the Delaware STEM Council. “Teaching can be

challenging, and all too often, the sacrifices these teachers make go unnoticed. At a time when we are asking so much more of our education professionals, we are happy to be able to give a little back.”

“Ashland is committed to helping fill the STEM jobs pipeline and ensuring that kids emerge from our schools with the knowledge and skills they will need to enter the workforce,” said Daryl Love, Community Relations Manager for Ashland. “We are happy to partner with Governor Markell and the Delaware STEM Council to acknowledge some of the truly talented teachers working in Delaware schools. These are the folks on the front lines, helping to prepare those future businessmen and businesswomen.”

For the 2013-14 school year, the Delaware STEM Educator Award Committee (a group of representatives from the Governor’s STEM Council) will review all completed applications and select two recipients: one at the elementary (K-5) level and one at the secondary level (6-12). Finalists will be recognized and presented with their awards during a special STEM program, where awardees will share innovative practices with teachers throughout the state.

Applicants must be certified teachers at the K-12 grade level in a Delaware public school, and be full-time employees of the school or school district as determined by state and district policies, and teach K-12 students at least 50 percent of the time.

For additional information or to download an application, go to [www.delawarestem.org](http://www.delawarestem.org).