

HERALD-WEIG CITY/COUNTY

Foundation seeks funding for AP courses

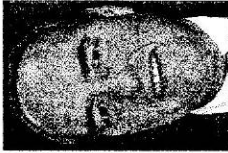
Group wants piece of \$125 million for math, science, English programs

By Holly Wagner
Herald-Whig Staff Writer

The Illinois Business Roundtable Education Foundation has been chosen to submit a proposal to the National Math and Science Initiative for training and incentive programs for advanced placement mathematics, science and English courses in Illinois.

Launched on March 9, with a lead gift of \$125 million from ExxonMobil, the initiative addresses the decline in the number of students prepared for and taking rigorous college courses in mathematics and science.

"Where (Illinois stands) in math and science in curriculum and performance by students ... has been an issue with us for a while," said Jeff Mays, president of



Mays

invited to submit full proposals. The first grants will be awarded in August, when the National Math and Science Initiative will make awards in 10 states of up to \$13 million over six years.

the Illinois Business Roundtable and recently elected to the Quincy School Board. Jennifer Ross is the Roundtable's director of education policy.

The Roundtable is among applicants from 21 states

"We've put forward a proposal to enhance the number of AP offerings, bring them to areas that are not now served, increase the number of kids taking courses like that as well as increase the pass rate of kids taking these courses," Mays said.

If approved, the funding wouldn't cover a statewide program, "but it's going to help us seed some things," he said.

According to the National Math and Science Initiative, hallmarks of training and incentive programs include extensive training of teachers, additional time on task for students,

financial incentives based on academic results, and cultivation of lead teachers to provide leadership to the program in their schools by mentoring other AP and pre-AP teachers.

NMSI wants to raise U.S. competitiveness by scaling up programs with a proven track record for increasing student success in math and science. In Texas, schools with such programs increased the number of students passing the AP exams by four- and five-fold, respectively, over five years.

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