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**KSTF TEACHING FELLOWSHIP ALUMNI EARN NATION'S
HIGHEST TEACHING CREDENTIAL**

**Heather Buskirk, Physics Teacher from Johnstown, New York, and
Derek Pope, Mathematics Teacher from Commack, New York,
Awarded Coveted 2010 National Board Certification**

Moorestown, NJ, December 15, 2010 — Knowles Science Teaching Foundation (KSTF) Teaching Fellowship alumni Heather Buskirk, physics teacher in Johnstown, New York, and Derek Pope, mathematics teacher in Commack High School in Commack, New York, have been awarded the prestigious certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). Achieved after a complex, rigorous evaluation process and considered the gold standard of the teaching profession, the NBPTS certification directly benefits student learning by allowing teachers to reflect on and hone their practice. In addition to Ms. Buskirk and Mr. Pope, two other KSTF Teaching Fellowships alumni became 2010 National Board Certified Teachers and two KSTF Teaching Fellows were awarded the certification in 2008.

“The National Board certification is the mark of a truly professional teacher, similar to board certification for physicians, architects and other highly-regarded professionals,” said Dr. Nicole Gillespie, Associate Director, KSTF Teaching Fellowships. “We commend Ms. Buskirk and Mr. Pope for setting the highest standard for their work and will continue to support other KSTF Fellows and alumni as they achieve this mark of distinction and advance high school mathematics and science education.”

“The certification experience has made me a better teacher,” said Derek Pope, who has taught at Commack High School since 2006. “It allowed me to reflect on my teaching methods and consider how best to engage my students in the process of thinking and learning. My classroom is a better place because of it.”

Mr. Pope’s portfolio entries showcased his students’ progression of understanding of complex exponential functions and arithmetic sequences. He also videotaped students as they engaged in a modeling exercise of a pendulum’s path.

The NBPTS certification process takes the better part of a school year and involves at least 300 hours of work beyond the regular demands of teaching. Teachers complete

three portfolios of classroom practice that include samples of student work and videotapes of teacher instruction; an assessment of content knowledge; and an additional portfolio focused on work with parents and the wider community. The process emphasizes reflection and analysis while providing insight into the teacher's own practice.

"The National Board recognizes how complex and challenging teaching is as a practice," said Heather Buskirk, who teaches three levels of physics at Johnstown High School. "Through the certification process, I was able to critically analyze my work and identify areas of strengths and needs for growth."

An advocate for new teachers and the teaching profession, KSTF encourages its Teaching Fellows and alumni nationwide to apply for the National Board certification. KSTF teachers receive support in the form of financial assistance to cover application and assessment fees up to \$2,000; video and other equipment to aid with the process; ongoing guidance from KSTF program officers; and access to the network of KSTF peers.

"KSTF has provided me with extensive professional development opportunities and helped me cultivate the skill of reflective teaching," said Ms. Buskirk. "KSTF's national network of other enthusiastic beginning science teachers is a tremendous resource, empowering me to be the best teacher I can be."

According to NBPTS (www.nbpts.org), in 2010, 8,600 teachers received National Board certification. The total number of Nationally Board Certified Teachers nationwide is just 91,000, approximately 1.5 percent of the 6.2 million teachers in the United States. The ultimate result of the certification is improved performance and achievement for the teachers and their students. According to a recent study by the National Research Council, students taught by Nationally Board Certified Teachers make higher gains on achievement tests than students taught by other teachers.

In addition to Ms. Buskirk and Mr. Pope, the five KSTF Fellows and alumni who have been awarded the NBPTS certification are:

- Mary Lee McJimsey, physics teacher, North Central High School, Spokane, Washington (2010 certification)
- Casey O'Hara, physics teacher, Carlmont High School, Belmont, California (2008 certification)
- Charles Sabatier, physics teacher, Mount Vernon High School, Alexandria, Virginia (2008 certification)
- Anne Watson, physics teacher, Montpelier High School, Montpelier, Vermont (2010 certification)

About KSTF

The Knowles Science Teaching Foundation (KSTF) was established by Janet H. and C. Harry Knowles in 1999 to increase the number of high quality high school science and mathematics teachers and ultimately improve math and science education in the United States. The KSTF Teaching Fellowship, the Foundation's signature program, awards

exceptional young men and women with a five-year early-career fellowship, empowering them to become master teachers and leaders in education. For more information, visit www.kstf.org