

MIND Research Institute

A neuroscience and education research-based non-profit corporation

Contact Information:
 Ingrid Ellerbe
 MIND Research Institute
 Vice President of Marketing
 3631 S. Harbor Blvd.
 Santa Ana, CA, USA, 92704
 Voice: 714.751.5443 x263
 E-Mail: iellerbe@mindresearch.net
 Website: www.mindresearch.net

BUSINESSES CHAMPION INNOVATIVE MATH INITIATIVE WITH FUNDING FOR MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR PROGRAM

MIND Research Institute Unites Businesses and Communities around Scalable, Sustainable Math Program throughout the United States

SANTA ANA, Calif. -- February 17, 2010 -- Leading corporations in financial services, high-tech fields and the defense industry are funding a unique math initiative in cities throughout the country. Using innovative instructional software based on three decades of brain research and developed by the nonprofit MIND Research Institute, the "Math Initiative" is a scalable, sustainable program that dramatically improves the math and problem-solving skills fundamental to the future workforce.

The program, which began in Southern California, is spreading to public school districts nationwide free-of-charge through private support. In Orange County, California, where more than 15,000 students participated in the program, the percentage of students testing into the Proficient or Advanced level increased by more than 12 percentage points, compared to the state average of 4.5 points. Neighboring Madison Elementary School in the Santa Ana Unified School District saw a more dramatic increase, jumping from 25.5 percent of students at Proficient and Advanced levels in 2003, to 82.7 percent in 2009. Nearly 80 percent of Madison Elementary School's students are English Language Learners (ELL) and over 95 percent are eligible for free or reduced lunch.

In the 2009 report *Leaders and Laggards*, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Center for American Progress and Frederick M. Hess of the American Enterprise Institute noted that more than 33 percent of first-year college students require remediation in either math or English. The business community has been a resounding voice in the call for innovative approaches to better science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education to eliminate this knowledge gap between high school and college and better prepare students for advanced studies in STEM fields. The Math Initiative provides a way for businesses to get involved and change the futures of its communities' students. In many cases, surrounding school districts become aware of the Math Initiatives' dramatic results and devote their own funds to purchasing the program.

The Math Initiative, which uses non-language based software games, has shown particular success among ELL and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. To ensure its sustainability, the Math Initiative features a customized professional development and training program for teachers and leadership institutes for administrators, to complement the research-proven MIND ST Math instructional software for students.

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The program is in place in Chicago Public Schools, Clark County School District, Houston Independent School District, Los Angeles Unified School District, Orange County Public Schools, Santa Clara Unified School District and San Mateo-Foster City School District.

"The business community's commitment in the Math Initiative is a sterling example of what is possible when businesses come together to drive academic improvement," said Andrew Coulson, president of the Education Division at MIND Research Institute. "The Math Initiative engages businesses in the math education process and makes them a critical part of a community-wide effort to enable students to succeed. Corporations admire MIND's scalability, as well as the smart business plan and strong management that make us, and our research-based programs, sustainable."

MIND's proven track record of success has garnered support for the Math Initiative from corporations in high-tech fields looking to build a stronger pipeline of high-tech workers.

"We realized that if we are to maintain our competitiveness, we must invest in students who are skilled in mathematics," noted Jim McCluney, CEO of Emulex, a funder of the Orange County Math Initiative. "The remarkably improved achievement and consistent results of the MIND Research Institute program attracted our attention and we are proud to be part of this successful effort to bring it to Orange County students and teachers."

MIND funders include Cisco, Experian, Sempra Energy, State Farm Insurance Companies, Taco Bell Corporation, Wells Fargo and Toyota USA. Other funders of the Math Initiative include Abbott Medical Optics, Emulex, Microsemi Corporation, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Pacific Life, Symantec, University of Phoenix, US Bank, Bank of America, The Boeing Company; The Capital Group Companies; Fluor Corporation; Edwards Lifesciences and Southern California Edison.

"Cisco has a focus on cultivating career and education opportunities for individuals throughout the world," said Michael Yutrzenka, executive director of the Cisco Foundation, which has supported MIND ST math since 2004. "MIND Research Institute caught our attention as an innovative solution to remove the hurdles that prevent millions of students from succeeding in math. Students must be skilled in math and problem solving if we are going to be able to fill our nation's shortages in engineering, science and technology. MIND's proven success in these areas, particularly among diverse populations, supports the Cisco Foundation's educational mission."

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Born out of decades of neuroscience research at the University of California, Irvine, MIND's unique approach to math education accesses the brain's innate "spatial temporal" reasoning ability to visualize and solve math concepts and problems. Students solve math problems presented as visual puzzles before being introduced to abstract language and symbols. They are fully engaged, through fun-to-play software "games" with instant feedback about why a solution works, or does not. Students work at their own pace to solve increasingly difficult problems, requiring them to think multiple steps ahead in space and time. The result – an increase in students' confidence in their ability to learn math and a desire to advance their mathematical knowledge.

About the MIND Research Institute

The MIND Research Institute is a neuroscience and education research-based, non-profit corporation. MIND applies its distinctive visual approach to illustrating math concepts and building problem-solving skills as the basis for innovative, research-proven math education programs for elementary and secondary schools. MIND's programs currently reach over 140,000 students and 10,000 teachers in more than 800 schools in 22 states. For more information, visit <http://www.mindresearch.net>.

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