

**Omaha Public Schools Partners with the Space Foundation  
and NASA Nebraska Space Grant to Present Space Discovery Institutes**

Omaha, NE (May 29, 2009) – The Space Foundation will deliver two weeks of Space Discovery Institute programming to teachers and students from the Omaha Public Schools. These courses will be delivered on the UNO campus beginning June 1 and teachers are eligible for graduate credit through UNO’s College of Education. This important new relationship has been made possible through grants to Omaha Public Schools by the Omaha-based Sherwood Foundation and the NASA Nebraska Space Grant.

“Omaha Public Schools and its partners are deeply committed to utilizing the Space Foundation to provide ground-breaking opportunities for students and teachers across the district,” said De Washington, Omaha Public Schools science lead teacher. “The Space Foundation staff has been visionary, helping us design programs and understanding the possibilities for our students in the future.”

The intense week-long programs, which feature space-related curriculum based on national standards and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) principles, are experiential, hands-on, and immediately transferable to the classroom. More about Space Discovery Institute programs can be found at [www.SpaceFoundation.org/education/content.php?id=328](http://www.SpaceFoundation.org/education/content.php?id=328).

In a unique delivery model requested by OPS, the Space Foundation will deliver the Institute in a new “Two Classrooms” concept for teachers and students; the program is usually held for only teachers. Students participating in the course will be high school students of the teachers participating. Both groups will be taught similar content in rooms adjacent to each other and then brought together several times a day for key hands-on activities and design challenges.

At the end of each day, students and teachers will write journal entries on the day’s events, enabling them to compare notes on how the curriculum and subject matter can be incorporated into the district’s curriculum and their classrooms, electives, clubs, and schools. The students will have as much input as the teachers on how these ideas can find their way into their classrooms. The Space Foundation anticipates that this delivery model will result in a powerful new education product of interest to other schools around the country.

Week one of the Institute will focus on biological and physical research, studying long-term space travel and how the human body reacts to microgravity – including a microgravity pool simulation. The second week will focus on astronomy principles for the classroom, studying kinesthetic astronomy – including a star gazing event at Mahoney State Park.

“Omaha Public Schools and its partners are providing excellent facilities for this two-week program in Omaha, including a state-of-the-art swimming pool with underwater observation portals for neutral buoyancy training sessions,” said Iain Probert, Space Foundation vice president of education.

Each student participant will receive one science elective credit from OPS, adding to the immediate value of the experience. Teachers completing the summer Space Discovery Institutes will have an opportunity to earn graduate credits at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.