

## **Distinguished Educator Praises Outstanding PRISM Teachers** *Encourages Classroom Creativity for Science and Math Performance*

**ORLANDO, Fla. (Sept. 24, 2010)** – One of President Obama’s key education advisors told teachers being honored for their work as math and science instructors Thursday that creativity in the classroom is an essential tool in building a generation prepared for careers in science, technology, engineering and math.

Dr. S. James Gates Jr., distinguished alumnus of Orlando’s Jones High School and the John S. Toll Professor of Physics and Director of the Center for String and Particle Theory at the University of Maryland, was the featured speaker at the Annual Teacher Awards Banquet of The PRISM Project.

Gates presented awards to 40 outstanding math and science teachers nominated by their principals and selected by their county school districts for recognition by PRISM, which is a 10-county coalition of business, industry and county school leaders devoted to **Promoting Regional Improvement in Science and Math**.

In 2009, he was appointed to the U.S. Presidents’ Council of Advisors on Science & Technology and now serves as co-chair of its working group on STEM preeminence for the nation. Gates has been published in more than 200 scientific publications, and since 1972 has taught science or mathematics at the university level at CalTech, Howard University, MIT, Gustavus Adolphus College and the University of Maryland.

Teachers honored came from the school districts represented by the Central Florida School Boards Coalition, a key PRISM Project partner. The Coalition includes: Orange, Osceola, Seminole, Lake, Brevard, Volusia, Hillsborough, Marion, Manatee and Polk counties. Now in its fourth year, the PRISM Teacher Recognition Program has honored more than 130 educators.

PRISM also rewards outstanding math and science students and this year has provided U.S. Savings Bonds to more than 150 students across the 10-county region ... an effort that has honored more than 300 students in four years.