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ASSET Inc. Announces New Executive Director

Founding Executive Director to Retire After 15 Years of Service

PITTSBURGH -- The Board of Directors of ASSET Inc. announced today that Dr. Helen Sobehart will become the new executive director of the education improvement nonprofit. She succeeds Dr. Reeny Davison, who will retire from the organization on June 1, 2010, after 15 years of service. Sobehart, who most recently served as the president of Cardinal Stritch University in Milwaukee, will join ASSET on May 1, 2010, and work with Davison to transition leadership. Davison will continue to serve as an advisor and advocate following her retirement.

Sobehart was unanimously selected following a five-month rigorous selection process that included a national search led by Egmont Associates and extensive interviews with a search committee comprised of ASSET Board Members.

“The ASSET Board of Directors is pleased to welcome Dr. Helen Sobehart as the new executive director of this innovative organization dedicated to continuously improving teaching and learning,” said Harry Goern, president of the ASSET Board of Directors and a management consultant. “Dr. Sobehart is a talented and respected leader with a spirit of service and a team approach. She brings with her 34 years of education and leadership experience that closely fits the needs and potential of ASSET at this important time.”

A native of Pittsburgh, Sobehart began her career in 1969 as a special education teacher with the Allegheny Intermediate Unit and North Hills School district. In 1976 she became the coordinator of personnel development at the Allegheny Intermediate Unit, a position she held until 1988 when she was named director of the Special Education Consortium of Northern Mercer County in Greenville, Pa. In 1990, Sobehart joined Fox Chapel Area School District in suburban Pittsburgh as the assistant superintendent, retiring in 1997.

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In 1998, Sobehart was selected to direct the doctoral program in educational leadership at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh and in 2005 was named associate provost and associate academic vice president. Sobehart joined Cardinal Stritch University in 2008, where she served as president.

Sobehart received the Legacy Foundation's Educator of the Year award in 2009, and was honored by Milwaukee Achiever Literacy Services with a Legacy Award for her international work promoting access to basic education as a way for women and minorities to break down social barriers and attain community leadership roles. In 2008, she was the recipient of the American Association of School Administrators' Dr. Effie Jones Humanitarian Award, a prestigious national honor that recognizes individual efforts related to the advocacy and support of women and minorities in education. Sobehart chairs a group of international scholars who study the impact of that underrepresentation and has authored books and articles on the topic.

Sobehart earned a Doctorate of Arts in history from Carnegie Mellon University, a M.S. in education from Duquesne University and a B.A. in sociology and psychology from Slippery Rock University. She formerly served on the board of NEED, a nonprofit college access program for minority students, and currently serves on the board of the Homeless Children and Family Emergency Fund.

"I am honored to be selected as ASSET's new executive director," said Sobehart. "ASSET is the exemplar of how business, government and educators can work together to make a profound, positive difference in teaching and learning for both teachers and students."

As ASSET's founding executive director, Davison has guided the organization from a pilot program in two school districts, through two National Science Foundation grants and into a self-sustaining nonprofit. Based on a proven track record of results in the classroom, ASSET was selected in 2006 to design and manage the statewide science education initiative *Science: It's Elementary*. Davison has lead this initiative in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Education, bringing standards- and inquiry-based science education to classrooms across the Commonwealth. Together, ASSET and *Science: It's Elementary* impact nearly 5,000 teachers and 142,000 students. Through Davison's leadership, ASSET is now considered one of the most innovative forces in systemic education reform in the country and is known for its measurable results in student achievement.

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“As I retire from the organization I’ve called my home, my inspiration and my passion, I offer my sincere thanks to all of the truly wonderful individuals with whom I’ve had the honor of working these past 15 years,” said Davison. “Together we’ve made great strides in preparing children for learning and life by connecting them to teachers of passion and excellence, and I leave this organization knowing it is poised with strong leadership for continued success.”

For more information about ASSET, visit www.assetinc.org. For a photo of Dr. Helen Sobehart, visit www.assetinc.org/news/images/HelenSobehart.JPG.

About ASSET Inc.

Established in 1994 by Bayer Corporation and several community partners, ASSET Inc. is an education improvement nonprofit dedicated to continuously improving teaching and learning. ASSET supports school districts in implementing a standards-based science education program through teacher professional development aligned with hands-on curriculum materials for grades K-8. In partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Education, ASSET also designs and manages Pennsylvania’s *Science: It’s Elementary* initiative, which garnered national attention from President Barack Obama, who singled out the program “as an example of state taking steps to encourage inquiry-based science statewide.” ASSET currently impacts 180 school districts, 5,000 teachers and 142,000 students. For more information, visit www.assetinc.org.

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