

STEM Education Coalition



Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

July 1, 2009

*The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Labor, Health and Human Services and
Education
Appropriations Subcommittee
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510*

*The Honorable David Obey
Chairman
The Honorable Todd Tiahrt
Ranking Member
Labor, Health and Human Services and
Education
Appropriations Subcommittee
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515*

Dear Chairmen Harkin and Obey and Ranking Members Cochran and Tiahrt:

On behalf of the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education Coalition, we are writing to convey our views on federal investments in fiscal year 2010 that you and your colleagues on the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations Subcommittees will consider shortly.

Over the past several years, Congress has repeatedly demonstrated strong bipartisan support for increased investment to strengthen the U.S. STEM education pipeline. This year, President Obama added his voice to that support during his remarks at the April 2009 meeting of the National Academies. Citing investments in math and science education and basic research that buoyed the country's success and innovation in the 20th Century, he signaled a renewed commitment, through which, "American students will move from the middle to the top of the pack in science and math over the next decade. For we know that the nation that out-educates us today will out-compete us tomorrow."

To this end, we urge you to adequately fund a number of programs in the FY 2010 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education appropriations bill.

Math and Science Partnerships at the Department of Education

The STEM Education Coalition has long supported the Math and Science Partnership (MSP) program at the Department of Education, authorized via Title II, Part B of the No Child Left Behind Act, and we strongly urge you to provide \$450 million in funding for this program in FY 2010.

This program has yielded strong results. It is integral to federal efforts to strengthen STEM education, and funding the MSP program at the fully authorized level of \$450 million will allow states to provide more research-based reform initiatives to enhance teacher content knowledge and increase student achievement in these areas. This program fosters innovative curriculum development and collaboration among math and science teachers, and, as you now, it is imperative to give schools and teachers the tools and knowledge they need to effectively teach math and science.

Math Now

Congress overwhelmingly approved the authorization of Math Now when it passed the America COMPETES Act in 2007. This new mathematics education initiative awards competitive grants to improve instruction in mathematics for student in kindergarten through ninth grade. Grantees would implement research-based mathematics program to enable all student to reach or excel grade-level achievement standards and prepare them to enroll in and pass algebra courses—an achievement that a number of studies, including the report of the National Mathematics Advisory Panel, point to as a harbinger of success in postsecondary study and beyond. The program and its goals warrant an investment of \$95 million in the program.

Investments in Teachers

The value of a qualified math, science, technology, engineering, chemistry, computer science, physics, or biology—to name a few—teacher in the development of a would-be scientist, mathematician or engineer is invaluable, and there are a number of other federal programs that aim to produce highly qualified teachers for every classroom, in every subject. The Transition to Teaching program, the Teacher Incentive Fund, Teacher Quality Partnerships, Educational Technology State Grant program, and School Improvement Grant program, among others, aim to produce high quality, well-supported teachers that are able to thrive in the workplace and effectively teach all students. Strong academic preparation is crucial to success in the STEM fields after high school or in pursuing STEM disciplines in postsecondary institutions, and we support federal investments in efforts provide it to the country's young people.

The STEM Education Coalition is composed of a diverse range of organizations representing all sectors of the technological workforce—from knowledge workers, to educators and education researchers, to scientists, engineers and technicians. Our Coalition works to raise awareness in Congress and throughout the Executive Branch about the critical role that STEM education—both form and informal—plays in enabling the United States to remain the economic and technology leader of the global marketplace of the 21st century.

If we can provide you any additional information on STEM education, please do not hesitate to contact James Brown at 202-872-6229 or Jodi Peterson at 703-312-9214.

Sincerely,

*Allegheny-Singer Research Institute
Altshuller Institute for TRIZ Studies
American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education
American Association of Physicists in Medicine
American Association of University Women (AAUW)
American Chemical Society
American Society for Engineering Education
American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers, Inc.
American Statistical Association*

ASME Center for Public Awareness
Association for Computing Machinery
Association for Women in Science
Association of Science-Technology Centers
ASTRA, The Alliance for Science & Technology Research in America
Biological Sciences Curriculum Study (BSCS)
Biotechnology Institute
Buhach Colony Engineering Academy
California Healthcare Institute (CHI)
Campaign for Environmental Literacy
Chicago Educational Publishing Company, LLC
Council on Undergraduate Research
EAST Initiative
Education Development Center, Inc.
Engineers Without Borders-USA
ETA/Cuisenaire
Exploratorium
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Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy
In Reach, Inc.
Information in Place, Inc.
INSPIRE, Institute for P-12 Engineering Research and Learning, Purdue University
Institute of Food Technologists (IFT)
International Technology Education Association
Kitchen Culture Education Technologies Inc.
Kitchen Culture Kits Inc.
Laurel School District. Delaware
LEARN Coalition
LEED - Linking Education and Economic Development
Maritime Academy Charter High School
Maryland Science Center
Math for America
Museum of Science, Boston
Museum of Science and Industry
National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering, Inc.,
National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity
National Center for Technological Literacy
National Council for Advanced Manufacturing
National Girls Collaborative Project
National Science Education Leadership Association
National Science Teachers Association
National Society of Professional Engineers
New York Hall of Science
New York State Technology Education Association
Ohio Mathematics and Science Coalition
Ohio Technology Education Advisory Council

Ohio Technology Education Association
Pathways into Science
PBS
Play Well TEKnologies
Project Exploration
SACNAS
Science Teachers Association of New York State
Self Sufficient Investors
Society for Research in Child Development
Society of Women Engineers
South Carolina's Coalition for Mathematics & Science
SPIE – The International Society for Optics and Photonics
STEM School Administrators Association
Technology Education Association of Massachusetts
Tennessee Science Teachers Association
Thunderbird Early College Charter School, Inc.
Triangle Coalition
University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown
Urban STEM Strategy Group