

STEM Education Coalition



April 15, 2008

The Honorable David Obey
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, and
Education and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
2314 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James T. Walsh
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, and
Education and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
2369 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Walsh:

On behalf of the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education Coalition, we appreciate the opportunity to convey our priorities for STEM education program under the jurisdiction of your subcommittee.

Math and Science Partnerships at the Department of Education

Our Coalition has long supported the Math and Science Partnership (MSP) program at the U.S. Department of Education (Title II B) and we strongly urge you to provide \$450 million in funding as you consider appropriations for fiscal year 2009.

Current math and science programs with proven results—such as the Math and Science Partnerships—are an integral part of federal efforts to strengthen STEM education. 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. Current MSP programs are helping teachers to deepen content knowledge, to gain inquiry experiences, to strengthen pedagogical skills, and to better evaluate student learning. MSP initiatives also foster professional learning communities and programs that link classroom teachers with researchers in STEM fields and in STEM pedagogy.

This year NCLB requires schools to begin testing in science. A host of well-regarded studies have concluded that an investment in teacher professional development is sorely needed to make fundamental changes to our students' understanding of math and science. We simply must better equip our schools and teachers with the tools and knowledge they need to effectively teach math and science. This can be done by strengthening math and science education by providing at least \$450 million for the Department of Education's Math and Science Partnerships program.

Math Now

Last year, Congress showed strong bipartisan support for increased investment to strengthen the U.S. STEM education pipeline and basic research in the physical sciences by enacting the *America COMPETES Act*. Part of that effort was the authorization of a new mathematics education initiative (dubbed "Math Now" in the legislation) that awards competitive grants to improve instruction in mathematics for students in kindergarten through ninth grade. Grantees would implement research-based mathematics programs to enable all students to reach or exceed grade-level achievement standards and

prepare them to enroll in and pass algebra courses—an achievement that a number of studies point to as a harbinger of success in postsecondary study and beyond. This program and its goals warrant support for the Administration’s request of funding the widely supported Math Now program at \$95 million.

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 formal and informal – plays in enabling the U.S. to remain the economic and technological 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,

Academy of Science-St. Louis
Aerospace Industries Association
AIAA
Allegheny-Singer Research Institute
Altshuller Institute for TRIZ Studies Inc.
American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education
American Association of Physicists in Medicine
American Association of Physics Teachers
American Association of University Women (AAUW)
American Chemical Society
American Council of Engineering Companies
American Geological Institute
American Physical Society
American Society of Civil Engineers
American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers, Inc.
ASME Center for Public Awareness
Association for Computing Machinery
Association for Women in Science
Association of Science-Technology Centers
ASTRA, Alliance for Science and Technology Research in America
Baltimore Washington Corridor Chamber of Commerce
Business-Higher Education Forum
California Healthcare Institute
Center for Excellence in Education
Council on Undergraduate Research
Education Development Center, Inc.
Elementary Science Coalition
Hands On Science Partnership
IEEE-USA
Institute of Food Technologists
International Technology Education Association
JETS
Maine Mathematics and Science Alliance
Maryland Science Center
Math for America

Museum of Science, Boston
National Association of Manufacturers
National Center for Optics and Photonics Education (OP-TEC)
National Center for Technological Literacy
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
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National Science Teachers Association
National Society of Professional Engineers
New Mexico State University
Project Exploration
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Public Broadcasting Service
SAE International
Science Companion
Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE)
Society of Women Engineers
SPIE – The International Society for Optics and Photonics
STEM Education Society
Triangle Coalition
University of Kansas
Vernier Software & Technology