

STEM Education Coalition



Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

November 17, 2006

The Honorable Rob Portman
Director, Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Director Portman:

On behalf of the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education Coalition, we are writing to strongly urge the Administration to increase federal investment in the STEM education programs in the Education and Human Resources (EHR) Directorate at the National Science Foundation (NSF) and in STEM-focused programs at the U.S. Department of Education in the fiscal year 2008 Budget.

It is our deeply held view that our nation's future economic prosperity in the increasingly competitive global economy will depend in large measure on our ability to better educate our young people in math, science and engineering and to attract more of our best and brightest students into the STEM fields. Thus, we commend the Administration for the high priority it has placed on funding the American Competitiveness Initiative (ACI) announced by President Bush in the State of the Union Address. The President has clearly articulated the importance of a strong national focus on STEM education.

Our Coalition strongly supports the mission of NSF's Education and Human Resources (EHR) Directorate and its efforts to foster improvements in K-12, undergraduate, graduate, continuing education, vocational, and informal STEM education. **The educational programs of NSF's EHR Directorate should be included as a component of the fiscal year 2008 American Competitiveness Initiative and should receive increased funding comparable to other ACI programs.** Innovative programs like the Math and Science Partnerships need to be strengthened if America is to rise to the challenges posed by the globally competitive economy of the 21st Century. We firmly support the robust funding of the EHR Directorate and believe that funding for NSF's STEM education programs should be increased without diminishing essential support for the Foundation's research directorates.

We also want to emphasize our support for the continued strong focus on STEM education programs at the U.S. Department of Education. **Increased funding for math and science education programs at the Department of Education, including the Math and Science Partnership program, will allow the states to continue research-based reform initiatives that enhance teacher content knowledge and increase student achievement in these areas.**

While we recognize that these are tight budgetary times, a strong consensus has emerged in the business, education, and scientific communities that our nation's future competitiveness in the global marketplace is directly tied to the ability of our schools to prepare children for the technological economy of the 21st century. We are pleased that over the last two years, many additional business leaders, educators, scientists, and policymakers have joined in calling for stepped-up investments targeted at improving STEM education.

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 aggressively to raise awareness in Congress and throughout the Executive Branch about the critical role that STEM education plays in enabling the U.S. to remain the economic and technological leader of the global marketplace of the 21st century.

Please contact James Brown at 202.872.6229 or Jodi Peterson at 703.312.9214 if we can provide you with any additional information or assistance.

Sincerely,

Acoustical Society of America
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
American Association of Physicists in Medicine
American Association of Physics Teachers
American Chemical Society
American Council on Education
American Geological Institute
American Institute of Biological Sciences
American Institute of Physics
American Physical Society
American Society of Civil Engineers
American Society of Heating, Refrigeration, and Air Conditioning Engineers, Inc.
ASME Center for Public Awareness
Association of Educational Publishers
ASTRA-The Alliance for Science and Technology Research in America
Business Higher Education Forum
Campaign for Environmental Literacy
Chicago Educational Publishing
Council on Undergraduate Research
East Initiative
Engineers Without Borders-USA
Exploratorium
IEEE-USA
Institute for Creative Technologies
Institute of Food Technologists

International Technology Education Association
Junior Engineering Technical Society (JETS)
Mathematical Association of America
Museum of Science, Boston
National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges
National Center for Technological Literacy
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
National Education Association
National Education Knowledge Industry Association
National Science Teachers Association
New England Council
Ohio Technology Education Association
Optical Society of America
Project Lead the Way
Society of Women Engineers
SPIE-The International Society for Optical Engineering
STEM Education Society
The University of Kansas
Triangle Coalition