



The Honorable Betsy DeVos
Secretary of Education
400 Maryland Ave SW
Washington, D.C. 20202

March 13, 2017

Dear Madam Secretary:

Congratulations on your confirmation as Secretary of Education.

We look forward continuing our relationship with the Department of Education to improve science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education. As an alliance of more than 600 education, business, and professional organizations from across the country, the STEM Education Coalition is united in advocating for policies that will improve STEM education at every level.

We strongly believe that STEM education must be elevated as a national priority as reflected through education reforms, policies to drive innovation, and federal spending priorities. America must have a world-class education system that focuses on 21st century skills so we can prepare the best workforce in the world. Many of today's highest-paying jobs are in STEM fields. These jobs demand problem-solving, teamwork, and creativity: all skills that are best cultivated through high-quality learning opportunities in STEM.

During your confirmation process, you stated that STEM education is an important and necessary part of our education system, and that the Department of Education can play a vital role in promoting the importance of STEM education to states and local school districts and encouraging them to prioritize funding for those activities.

As you establish the Department's agenda and budget priorities going forward, we hope you will consider the following policy recommendations:

- Fully fund Title IV, Part A, of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) at the authorized level of \$1.65 billion. The Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants will allow states and districts to make key decisions about their own STEM priorities including:
 - expanding high-quality STEM courses, including computer science;
 - increasing access to STEM for underserved and at risk student populations;
 - supporting the participation of students in STEM nonprofit competitions (such as robotics, science research, invention, mathematics, computer science, and technology competitions);
 - providing hands-on learning opportunities in STEM;

- integrating other academic subjects, including the arts, into STEM subject programs;
 - creating or enhancing STEM specialty schools;
 - integrating classroom based and afterschool and informal STEM instruction; and
 - expanding environmental education.
- Provide the highest possible funding level for ESSA Title IIA (Preparing, Training, And Recruiting High Quality Teachers, Principals, or Other School Leaders), to support STEM educators from recruitment through career advancement.
 - Utilize the authority provided under ESSA to establish a STEM Master Teacher Corps (Section 2245 of ESSA). This program would support the highest-quality teachers and encourage sharing of best practices between STEM education professionals in five to ten leading states.
 - Provide the highest possible funding level for Title IV Part B (21st CCLC). New language in ESSA allows 21st CCLC to fund high-quality STEM programming in afterschool and summer learning programs.
 - Encourage states and districts to prioritize STEM learning and activities through non-regulatory guidance and through the sharing of best practices, data, and outcomes of successful federally supported STEM programming.
 - Appoint a well-qualified STEM education expert to serve in the Secretary's office to help oversee and support Department-wide STEM education efforts.
 - Prepare an annual report to assess the level at which states are utilizing the new authorities provided under ESSA to support and prioritize STEM education and workforce development activities.

Our Coalition supports comprehensive efforts to expand the capacity and diversity of the STEM workforce pipeline, including targeted initiatives to promote the inclusion of women, underrepresented minorities, and other high-need populations in STEM fields. A successful approach to improving STEM education must integrate workforce, K-12, higher-education, career and technical, informal and out-of-school learning, and research elements to effectively leverage resources across the federal agencies.

We look forward to working with you and your team at ED.

Sincerely,

James Brown
Executive Director