



Talking Points

▲ Increase Funding for the Math and Science Partnership Program at the U.S. Department of Education.

The Math and Science Partnership (MSP) program created in Title II part B of No Child Left Behind have been authorized at \$450 million and have never been fully funded. These programs are one of the most successful programs in getting money directly to the states to effectively fund innovative efforts targeting the improvement of American students in math and science. Given the critical roles these two subjects, along with technology and engineering, play in maintaining U.S. competitiveness in the world markets it is essential that the MSP program be adequately funded to provide states the maximum capability to augment student achievement.

These programs have been flat funded for the past several years at a level less than half of their authorized amounts. While Congress faces numerous pressures and budgetary constraints, the MSP program is one area that has great potential to reap extreme benefits as we move into the 21st century. As America takes on the mounting competition in other parts of the world it will become increasingly important that U.S. students are well trained in the skills necessary to become the innovators, to remain on the leading edge of economic development and to produce the needed advances to create and sustain jobs in the U.S.

With the increasing focus on Math and Science, including the requirement for testing in science as part of No Child Left Behind, there is a great need within the states to develop programs that can help students succeed. The Math and Science Partnerships have been just such a program and have been very successful at the state level in providing the necessary funds to allow local education agencies working in conjunction with institutions of higher education and local consortia to develop and implement innovative approaches in both math and science. To foster innovative approaches to curriculum integration the MSP program should also follow the Senate's language and encourage the inclusion of technology and engineering components. Most importantly, to sustain these programs, and to expand the reach and influence of the successful models, Congress should provide full funding for this important program.

▲ Amend No Child Left Behind to include science in the calculations of AYP or Adequate Yearly Progress and allow states greater flexibility in determining what constitutes progress given the nature of science instruction.

The current No Child Left Behind Act requires the testing of Science to begin in the 2007-08 academic year. While several states and local school districts have opted to include student performance in science as part of their calculation of school performance, it is not required to be included under the Federal legislation.

Congress should amend the No Child Left Behind Act to include science in the calculation of AYP or Adequate Yearly Progress. In doing so, however, Congress should recognize the nature of science and the way it is taught and allow states greater flexibility in determining how to assess student performance, skill, and knowledge from year to year.

Science should be taught in a hands-on, inquiry based approach. The most successful methods of testing this might include some form of performance based testing which by its nature would be more complicated and difficult to score, but, would allow proper evaluation of student performance in science. Current requirements tend to encourage simple answer or multiple choice testing which would change the direction of teaching in this key subject. Allowing for greater flexibility will encourage states to develop a more performance based models that are more in keeping with the way in which students should learn science.

▲ Fully fund the programs authorized under the bipartisan America COMPETES Act.

This past year Congress in a strong bipartisan effort authorized a broad program to increase American competitiveness as we move forward into the 21st Century. This legislation, the America COMPETES Act, authorizes more than \$43 billion for increased funding and programmatic additions in STEM Education while making a deep commitment to increasing the U.S. investment in scientific research and development across the federal agencies.

In addition to the mandate within COMPETES to tie the growth of funds at the Education and Human Resources Directorate, EHR, at the National Science Foundation to the growth of the overall NSF budget the Act also authorizes significant investments in STEM education programs for development of the teaching workforce. COMPETES authorizes the Robert Noyce Scholarship program, for example, at an average of nearly \$90 million per year over the next several years. The program is currently funded at only a fraction of that level.

Within the Department of Education COMPETES authorizes two programs at \$95 million each for the improvement of Mathematics success among students K-12. The Act authorizes the development of programs that encourage study in STEM fields leading to a baccalaureate degree with concurrent teacher certification. COMPETES would create and authorizes \$125 million for the development of 2 or 3 year master's degree programs in STEM education for in-service teachers. The Act authorizes \$120 million/year in grants to states to develop P-16 councils to improve coordination of STEM education with workforce needs. In addition COMPETES authorizes \$75 million per year for expansion of the AP and IB courses in STEM subjects.

Congress made a strong statement about the importance of STEM education in America's ability to compete in the global economy, and should fully fund the programs outlined in the America COMPETES Act.



Doing what's Best for Math, Science, and Technology Education

Meeting the Needs of Educators in the 110th Congress

As Congress deliberates the Federal Budget for Fiscal Year 2009 there are several key areas that are critical for our continued investment in educational excellence and national competitiveness in the global marketplace. Innovation will continue to be the driver of American economic growth and innovation requires a strong commitment to science, technology, engineering and mathematics, STEM, education.

In addition to the normal course of events inherent in the budget process, this year is also key because of the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind. Congress has an opportunity to demonstrate leadership in STEM education by making science, technology, engineering and mathematics an integral part of the reauthorized No Child Left Behind Act recognizing the importance the importance of all four of these key subjects in America's commitment to the future.

- ▲ Congress should increase funding for Mathematics and Science Partnerships at the U.S. Department of Education. This program supports state education offices as they seek to improve student performance in science and mathematics. Funds are distributed directly to the states allowing them to target the areas and subjects of greatest need and to put programs in place that provide the greatest impact. The Math and Science Partnership program has never been fully funded and for the past several years has flat funded the MSP program at less than half of its authorized level. Congress should fully fund the Math Science Partnership program, include technology education within the program, and commit the funds needed to make the necessary progress STEM education.
- ▲ Congress should amend the No Child Left Behind Act to require science be part of the states' calculation of adequate yearly progress or AYP and allow states greater flexibility in determining what constitutes progress given the nature of science instruction. Science should be taught in a hands-on, inquiry based approach. Allowing for greater flexibility will encourage states to develop performance based models that are more in keeping with the way in which students should learn science and would allow proper evaluation of student performance in science.
- ▲ Congress should fully fund the investment it authorized in the America COMPETES Act. This \$43.3 Billion legislation package, passed with broad bipartisan support, calls for increased funding in Federal research and development budgets across the Federal agencies. Within this investment COMPETES provides for increased investment in STEM education at the Department of Education, NSF and within the "Mission Agencies". Education programs authorized under COMPETES would fund efforts to improve K-12 STEM education at the classroom level, improve the quality of teachers, provide scholarship opportunities for those seeking to become teachers in STEM fields, and provide for experiential learning opportunities to enhance educator content knowledge and practice. Congress should commit to America's future success and fully fund the COMPETES Act.