

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING & MATHEMATICS (STEM) EDUCATION COALITION

*American Association of Physicists in
Medicine
American Association of Physics Teachers
American Astronomical Society
American Chemical Society
American Educational Research Association
American Geological Institute
American Geophysical Union
American Institute of Aeronautics and
Astronautics
American Institute of Biological Sciences
American Institute of Physics
American Meteorological Society
American Physical Society
American Physiological Society
American Society of Agronomy
American Society of Civil Engineers
American Society of Mechanical Engineers
American Sociological Association
ASEE Engineering Deans Council
Association of State Supervisors of
Mathematics
Biological Sciences Curriculum Study
(BSCS)
Center for Educational Outreach, Whiting
School of Engineering, Johns Hopkins
University
Chabot Space & Science Center
Crop Science Society of America
Delta Education
Education Development Center, Inc
Exploratorium
Institute of Electrical & Electronics Engineers-
USA
Institute of Food Technologists
International Technology Education
Association
Mathematical Association of America
Michigan State University
Museum of Science, Boston
National Association of Biology Teachers
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
National Education Knowledge Industry
Association
National Science Teachers Association
Optical Society of America
Project Lead the Way
Society of Automotive Engineers
Society of Women Engineers
Soil Science Society of America
SPIE-The International Society for Optical
Engineering
Technology Student Association
TERC
The Association of American Geographers
The Federation of Behavioral, Psychological,
& Cognitive Sciences
Triangle Coalition*

April 8, 2005

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman, Commerce, Justice and Science Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
S-146A Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On behalf of the science, technology, engineering, mathematics, higher education and business groups listed here, we urge you to continue the federal commitment to K-12 science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education. In particular, we urge you to increase spending for the National Science Foundation (NSF) to a level that would permit \$200 million in funding for the NSF Math and Science Partnership (MSP) program, and restoration of funding for the NSF Education and Human Resources Directorate to FY2004 levels.

The current FY2006 budget proposes to cut education programs at the NSF by 12 percent (\$737 million, down from \$841 million in FY2005). Programs under the Elementary, Secondary and Informal Education Division would be cut 22.6 percent (\$140 million, down from \$181 million in FY2005), and the Research, Evaluation, and Communication (REC) budget would be cut by more than 43 percent (\$33 million, down from \$59 million in FY2005). The FY2006 NSF Math and Science Partnerships (MSPs) would see a 24 percent cut to \$60 million.

In this tight budget environment, we understand that difficult choices must be made. Increased and continued investment in these programs is critical, however, if we want to ensure that our students—the future scientists, technologists, engineers, mathematicians, workers, and others responsible for our nation's future innovations, our national security, our economy, and our quality of life—receive a world class education in the sciences and mathematics, and that we have the research base essential to improving it.

The NSF MSPs are working to develop scientifically sound, model reform initiatives that will improve teacher quality, develop rigorous curricula, and increase student achievement in these areas. These programs are *not* duplicative of the U.S. Department of Education Math and Science Partnerships; in fact, without one program, the other program is significantly weakened. The state-based ED MSPs are not capable of producing the needed research in these areas and look to the NSF MSPs to develop proven models and tools necessary to enhance teacher quality and student achievement.

Other programs in the NSF Education and Human Resources (EHR) directorate, such as Instructional Materials Development, the Teacher Professional Continuum, and the Centers for Learning and Teaching, are designed to support and improve both formal and informal STEM education at all levels. These programs are unique in their capacity to move promising ideas from research to practice, to develop new and improved materials and assessments, to explore new uses of technology to enhance K-12 instruction, and to create better teacher training techniques.

NSF's peer review system that enlists leading scientists, mathematicians, engineers, and academicians to improve K-12 STEM education programs is at the center of this education improvement infrastructure. The NSF peer review model is highly regarded in the scientific community and the programs produced under this approach are developed, tested, and evaluated to insure their efficacy.

Please contact Patti Curtis at 202.785.7385 if we can provide you with any additional information or if you have any questions.