

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

Meeting the Needs of Educators in the 2006 Federal Budget

As Congress considers and debates the Federal Budget for Fiscal Year 2006 there are three key areas that are critical to our commitment to improvement of Mathematics, Science, and Technology education if we are to meet the expectations and objectives of No Child Left Behind.

- ▲ The Math Science Partnership (MSP) Program at the National Science Foundation (NSF) must continue to be funded. Congress should restore funding to this program at a level equal to at least the FY 2004 level and greater if possible. The competitive, peer-reviewed, NSF MSPs seek to develop model reform initiatives that will improve teacher quality, develop challenging curricula, and increase student achievement in mathematics and science. These are the initiatives that are and will be implemented in many cases by the MSP program funded under U.S. Department of Education (ED). Without one, the other is significantly weakened. 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.
- ▲ The double digit cuts to NSF K-12 math and science education programs in the FY 2006 NSF Education and Human Resources (EHR) Directorate budget proposed by the Administration are not acceptable. Funding to the EHR programs at the National Science Foundation should be restored minimally to FY 2004 levels. NSF's educational investments—which amount to less than 0.1 percent of the nation's education enterprise—are critically important to our national interest. The US economic success, our global competitiveness and ultimately our national security depend on a scientifically literate and skilled workforce—not just scientists and engineers but nurses, medical technicians, biotech lab technicians and even plant floor supervisors who must have a solid grounding in the sciences and mathematics.

Under the Administration's FY 2006 funding proposal, the total budget under the NSF Education and Human Resources (EHR) directorate would decline 12.4 percent from \$841 million to \$737 million. Funding for programs under Elementary, Secondary, and Informal Education division (ESIE) would be cut by 22 percent. Congress must increase funding for these critical programs that fund the research and development and the infrastructure necessary to effect changes to K-12 STEM education.

- ▲ We applaud the President's proposal to increase funding for the ED MSPs to \$269 million and strongly encourage Congress to support this level of commitment. Under NCLB, the funds appropriated for the ED MSPs go directly to the states as formula grants. These critical funds are then targeted to areas of greatest need including teacher professional development and student performance in math, science, and technology, key target areas of NCLB.
- ▲ We strongly urge Congress to reject the President's proposed change to NCLB that would restrict the use of funds in the ED MSPs. The President's request to create a new federally controlled competitive grant program targeted at high school student mathematics achievement would greatly reduce the states flexibility to use the most valuable funds available to meet the most critical needs. Under NCLB the MSP funds are to be allocated to the States under formula grants to be used to meet the States NCLB obligations.

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