

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

Support Our National Security and Economic Competitiveness

Urge the Appropriators to Designate Funds in FY09 for Science & Math Teachers' Professional Development

DEADLINE: March 12, 2008

Please join us in signing the attached letter to Chairman Obey and Ranking Minority Member Walsh of the Labor, Health and Human Services & Education Subcommittee requesting at least \$450 million in funding for the Math and Science Partnership program at the Department of Education. These partnerships provide professional development and in-service training for science and math teachers.

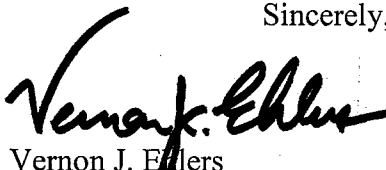
Funding for math and science professional development is needed since we are seeing disturbing trends in the United States' K-12 student performance on basic math and science tests. Students from other countries are outperforming our own, and we are losing ground in science and technology fields. The maintenance of our national expertise, prosperity and security requires that our students dramatically improve their math and science skills. In addition, the No Child Left Behind Act began requiring science testing in 2007-08, making it imperative to provide in-service science teacher training.

This is now the principal program of the federal government for science education in our schools. If we are going to address seriously the science problem in the United States, this is the place to start.

Also, this is a program-level request: You do not need to file a disclosure, but we request that you please be sure to indicate your support in the Appropriations Committee's online database. For your reference, the Math & Science Partnerships are funded under the "School Improvement" account at the U.S. Department of Education.

If you wish to sign the attached letter, please contact Rachel Post with Rep. Ehlers (5-3831 or rachel.post@mail.house.gov) or Chris Hartmann with Rep. Holt (5-5801 or christopher.hartmann@mail.house.gov).

Sincerely,


Vernon J. Ehlers
Member of Congress


Rush Holt
Member of Congress

March X, 2008

The Honorable David Obey
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, and
Education
House Committee on Appropriations
2314 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James T. Walsh
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, and
Education
House Committee on Appropriations
2369 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Walsh:

As your subcommittee considers its priorities for the fiscal year 2009 appropriations for Labor, Health and Human Services & Education, we respectfully request that you provide at least \$450 million in funding to strengthen mathematics and science education, as authorized in the No Child Left Behind Act.

The need for fundamental improvements to our nation's K-12 math and science education is well known. International student assessments, such as TIMSS and PISA, highlight the shortcomings of our students as compared to their international peers who have repeatedly demonstrated superior math and science knowledge and skills. Also, our nation's "report card", the National Assessment of Educational Progress, demonstrates that large portions of our students do not have a "basic" understanding of math and science.

A host of well-regarded studies have concluded that an investment in teacher professional development is sorely needed to make fundamental changes to our students' understanding of math and science.

Before the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), Congress provided substantially more funding for math and science teacher professional development through the Eisenhower program than we have since 2001. While Title II, Part A – the State Grants for Improving Teacher Quality – may be used for professional development, a 2005 U.S. Department of Education report found that the majority of districts use these funds for class size reduction. Many science teachers report little, if any, funds available for professional development activities. NCLB required schools to begin science testing in the 2007-08 school year, and our teachers must be equipped with the tools to effectively teach math and science.

The Math and Science Partnerships program is an innovative, proven program designed to improve teacher content knowledge and teaching skills in math and science subjects. Through formula grants to every state, the Math and Science Partnerships provide crucial teacher professional development and teacher in-service training by linking school districts with university mathematics, science and engineering departments. As a result of the Math and Science Partnerships program, our students' math and science skills will be strengthened.

We respectfully request that you continue to strengthen our math and science education system by providing at least \$450 million for the Department of Education's Math and Science Partnerships program.