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Executive Director

Vance Ablott

The Honorable Al Franken
U.S Senate
309 Hart Senate Office Building,
District of Columbia 20510-2303

April 5, 2011

Dear Senator Franken:

I am writing on behalf of the Triangle Coalition for Science and Technology Education and its member organizations to support the STEM Master Teacher Corps Act of 2011. In his State of the Union Address, President Obama called for the addition of 100,000 new STEM educators over the next decade and yet studies tell us that many highly qualified, and inspiring young teachers in these critical fields leave the teaching profession for more lucrative careers in industry. While establishing pathways for the creation of new teachers is noble and critical, it is essential that we do something to encourage these teachers to remain in classrooms and share their excitement for science, mathematics, engineering and technology with tomorrow's young innovators.

The STEM Master Teacher Corps Act will provide a key mechanism for enticing the best and brightest teachers in STEM fields to not only choose a teaching career, but facilitates their continued commitment. The STEM Master Teacher Corps Act will give them a chance to share their knowledge, their passion, and their creativity with students and fellow educators alike. At the same time it will recognize their unique and critically needed skills and educational background by allowing local education authorities and states to compensate them for their commitment.

The focus of the STEM Master Teacher Corps Act is on the top 5% of STEM Teachers and the placement of those teachers in schools and districts with the greatest needs. We know how difficult it is to get good teachers into these schools and districts under any circumstance, but it is even more of a challenge for these districts to recruit and retain good, let alone great, STEM professionals and your proposed legislation targets just that. We commend your effort to accomplish this critical goal.

Triangle Coalition wholeheartedly endorses this critical piece of legislation and urges the Senate to include the critical components of The STEM Master Teacher Corps Act in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as it comes before the Senate this year. The incorporation of The STEM Master Teacher Act within the reauthorized ESEA will ensure that federal K-12 education policy catalyzes the development of a highly skilled STEM workforce which will ensure our competitiveness and leadership in the global economy.

We thank you for your leadership in this field and look forward to working with you to help pass The STEM Master Teacher Corps Act of 2011.

Respectfully,

Vance R. Ablott
Executive Director