

TALKING POINTS


Maintain the Federal Commitment to K-12 STEM Education


National Science Foundation

Core Message:

We ask Congress to reject the Administration's proposal for double digit cuts to the National Science Foundation's FY2006 Education and Human Resources budget for K-12 math and science education programs. We ask Congress to, at a minimum, restore funding back to FY2004 levels of \$944 million for programs under the NSF EHR Directorate, including \$206 million for Elementary, Secondary and Informal Education (ESIE). We further ask that Congress strongly consider increasing funding for the Math and Science Partnership program to \$200 million in light of the upcoming 2007-08 NCLB science testing requirements.

Background:

-  Under the Administration's FY2006 funding proposal, the total budget under the National Science Foundation Education and Human Resources (EHR) directorate would decline 12.4 percent from \$841 million to \$737 million. Funding for programs under the Elementary, Secondary, and Informal Education division (ESIE) would be cut 22 percent, from \$181 million to \$140 million. This would lead to reductions in critical R&D programs for K-12 STEM curriculum development, pre-service and in-service teacher education, the informal science infrastructure, and uses of technology to enhance K-12 instruction and create systemic reform.


-  The NSF Math and Science Partnerships (MSPs) would be cut by 24 percent, from \$79 million to \$60 million. The NSF MSPs seek to develop model reform initiatives that will improve teacher quality, develop challenging curricula, and increase student achievement in mathematics and science. 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. In many cases the programs under the Math and Science Partnerships can be implemented by the MSP programs funded under U.S. Department of Education (ED). These programs are not duplicative, but synergistic, without one program, the other program is significantly weakened.


U.S. Department of Education

Core Message:

We ask congress to fund the FY2006 ED Math and Science Partnerships at \$269 million and allocate these funds directly to the states as required under the No Child Left Behind Act.


Background:


-  We applaud the President's FY 2006 budget proposal to increase funding for the Math and Science Partnerships at the U. S. Department of Education (ED) under No Child Left Behind 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 block grants. These critical funds are then targeted to areas of greatest need, including teacher professional development and student performance in math, science, and technology, all key target areas of NCLB.

-  We strongly urge Congress to reject the Administration's proposal that would re-direct \$120 million of funds away from the Dept. of Education state-based MSP programs to create a new federally-administered competitive grant program. The Administration's proposal would require a change to the NCLB statute and 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 allocated to the States under formula grants to be used to meet the state's NCLB math and science education obligations. Restricting the \$120 million for grants at the Dept. of Education would have the net effect of decreasing funds available to the states for these critical programs.

Core Message:

We ask Congress to approve and fully fund the Senate's reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act and to strengthen the connections between NCLB and Vocational and Technical Education.

-  We strongly urge Congress to approve the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act as proposed by the Senate and to fund it at a minimum to the level of FY 2005. This version gives the States the greatest flexibility in the use of the funds by allowing for direct distribution to the Local Education Authorities, while requiring accountability in the funded programs. In addition there are provisions for as much as 15% to be set aside by the State Education Authorities for administration and program development.

-  The Perkins funds allow for the development of non-traditional education while strengthening economic and workforce readiness requirements at a state and local level. Perkins tracking data shows increasing participation and success among underrepresented groups including females and minorities. It also allows states to use up to 10% of the funds through set asides to target programs to areas of greatest need.