

January 5, 2006

The Honorable Andrew Card  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Card:

On behalf of the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education Coalition, we urge the Administration to take decisive action to strengthen our nation's STEM education system by raising public awareness about the importance of STEM education in ensuring future American prosperity and competitiveness and by increasing federal investments in science, math, engineering and technology education.

While we recognize that these are tight budgetary times and the challenges we face are great, a strong consensus is emerging among leaders in the scientific, business, and education communities that America's future competitiveness in the global marketplace is directly tied to the ability of our education systems to prepare children in mathematics, science, and engineering.

A panel of senior business leaders, scientists, researchers, and educators, convened by the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering, and the Institute of Medicine, addressed these issues in an October 12 report to Congress entitled *Rising Above the Gathering Storm*. This report recommended top actions that federal policy makers could take to enhance the nation's science and technology enterprise so the United States can successfully compete and prosper in the global community of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. **The number one action item on the panel's list of recommendations was to improve STEM education at our nation's K-12 schools, postsecondary institutions and other educational entities.**

Earlier this month, a group of over 50 chief executives and university presidents met for a National Summit on Competitiveness, hosted by Secretary of Commerce Gutierrez. In a joint statement, the group called for expanding the innovation talent pool in the U.S. by doubling the number of graduates in STEM fields, increasing the number of K-12 teachers with STEM backgrounds, and revitalizing federal investment in long-term basic research.

Our Coalition is actively engaged in spreading the message that improvement to STEM education at all levels – and increased federal investment in STEM education programs – is critical to our nation's continued economic and technological leadership. The calls to action on this issue are now coming from nearly every quarter. We strongly urge the Administration to respond by raising this issue in January's State of the Union address and making it a priority in the FY2007 budget process. It is only through bold leadership at the highest levels of the federal government that our nation can meet this important challenge.

The STEM Education Coalition is composed of a diverse range of over 40 groups representing all sectors of the technological workforce – from knowledge workers, to educators and education researchers, to scientists, engineers, and technicians. Our coalition has been in existence prior to the No Child Left Behind Act and has continually supported STEM related programs for teachers and students.

If we can provide you any additional information on STEM education, please do not hesitate to contact James Brown at 202-872-6229 or Jodi Peterson at 703-312-9214.

ACT, Inc.  
American Association of Physics Teachers  
American Chemical Society  
American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics  
American Physical Society  
ASME Center for Public Awareness  
ASTRA, The Alliance for Science & Technology Research in America  
American Institute of Physics  
Chicago Educational Publishing Co.  
Council on Undergraduate Research  
IEEE-USA  
Engineers Without Borders-USA  
JETS  
Museum of Science, Boston  
National Association of Biology Teachers  
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics  
National Science Teachers Association  
OSA, Optical Society of America  
Society of Women Engineers