April 28, 2003 via fax: 202.225.3059

Dear Chairman Regula:

We are very grateful for your support of the U.S. Department of Education’s (ED) Math and Science Partnership (MSP) program in the FY 2003 appropriations. Funding this program at $100 million transformed this initiative into a competitive, state-based program. Your leadership has set in motion a process that will lead to urgently needed professional development programs to ensure that our children are taught by highly qualified mathematics and science teachers.

MSPs are designed to bring together all relevant stakeholders, including university or college engineering, mathematics or science departments, businesses, the state education agency and a local high-need school to address specific local needs. The program provides flexibility, allowing the partnerships to:

- Recruit, train and mentor new math and science teachers;
- Develop summer institutes and distance learning to provide ongoing professional development opportunities;
- Bring teachers together with scientists, mathematicians and engineers to enhance subject matter knowledge and teaching skills;
- Develop more rigorous curricula, aligned with challenging state and local standards, and consistent with post secondary expectations;
- Effectively integrate technology into the classroom; and
- Design programs to encourage young women and underrepresented minorities to pursue science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) careers.

Improving the teaching and learning of mathematics and science will require a significant investment in teacher training. We believe it is necessary to provide reliable resources to these implementation systems. We urge you and your committee to commit to fully fund the MSPs by the time science assessments are required in FY 2007. To that end, we urge you to provide $200 million in FY 2004.

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has also launched a complementary Math and Science Partnership program, which we support, that seeks to develop ideal models and best practices via a competitive grant process. Yet, not every state will benefit from this program. The ED program is needed so that every state can develop the infrastructure to implement these best practices.

Our nation’s K-12 mathematics and science education is in crisis. International tests show our students lagging behind many industrialized nations in mathematics and science. National scores remain flat. At the same time, U.S. demand for scientists and engineers is expected to increase at a rate of more than double that of other occupations while companies continue to rely on--through exported jobs or H-1B visas-- foreign scientists, engineers and technicians for a skilled workforce. Technology illiteracy remains the norm as our nation faces a host of unconventional threats to our national security.

We urge you to support our nation’s K-12 mathematics and science education by progressively funding the Department of Education’s Math and Science Partnership program to reach the authorized level of $450 million by FY 2007. Thank you for considering our request. For additional information, please contact either Patti Burgio at 202.785.7385 or Laura Kolton at 202.872.4384.