



Congress of the United States of America  
House of Representatives

Vernon J. Ehlers

June 12, 2007

Michigan

The Honorable David R. Obey  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on LHHS  
B300 Rayburn  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable James T. Walsh  
Ranking Republican  
Subcommittee on LHHS  
1016 Longworth  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Republican Walsh,

I am writing to respectfully urge you to increase the level of funding provided to an **outstanding teacher training and professional development program, the Math and Science Partnerships program**, at the U.S. Department of Education. Last week, the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations Subcommittee provided \$182.160 million in funding for the Math & Science Partnerships program for FY08, the same level of funding provided for FY07 and FY06.

As you may be aware, Congress authorized the Math and Science Partnership program as part of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001. Under this program, every state receives formula funding, and each state is required to award competitively this funding to eligible school districts and their college or university partner to carry out innovative math and science professional development activities.

The flat-funding of the Math and Science Partnerships, an innovative, proven program designed to improve teacher content knowledge and teaching skills in math and science subjects, is very troubling considering the importance of these fields to U.S. global competitiveness and our national security.

It is even more troubling that the **bill flat-funds the only dedicated funding source of math and science teacher professional development**. While Title II, Part A – the State Grants for Improving Teacher Quality -- may be used for professional development, a 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 requires that schools begin testing in science this coming school year, and our teachers must be equipped with the tools to effectively teach science.

The recent passage of several related House bills **demonstrated overwhelming bipartisan support for improving math and science education**. Also, a resounding bipartisan chorus of business leaders, educators, Nobel laureates and other luminaries has called for




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improvements in teacher professional development. This spring, Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates testified regarding the importance of math and science education, and stated, "If we are going to demand more from our students and teachers, then it is our obligation to provide them with the support they need to meet the challenge. All students – regardless of age, grade level, gender, or race – do better when they are supported by a good teacher." The Math and Science Partnerships provide necessary professional development enabling effective math and science teaching that directly strengthens our students' math and science skills. We must allocate increased funding for math and science professional development in the FY08 appropriations bill.

Again, I respectfully and wholeheartedly urge you to boost the funding level provided to the Math and Science Partnership program. I realize that this requires finding an offset, and I am very willing to discuss this with you.

Sincerely,

  
Vernon J. Ehlers  
Member of Congress

VJE: rp

Cc: The Honorable Jerry Lewis  
The Honorable Ralph Regula  
The Honorable John E. Peterson  
The Honorable Dave Weldon  
The Honorable Michael K. Simpson  
The Honorable Dennis R. Rehberg  
The Honorable Joe Knollenberg  
The Honorable Nita M. Lowey  
The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro  
The Honorable Jesse L. Jackson, Jr.  
The Honorable Patrick J. Kennedy  
The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard  
The Honorable Barbara Lee  
The Honorable Tom Udall  
The Honorable Michael Honda  
The Honorable Betty McCollum  
The Honorable Tim Ryan  
The Honorable Carolyn C. Kilpatrick