June 20th, 2011

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chair
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
United States Senate
731 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-1502

The Honorable Michael B. Enzi
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
United States Senate
379A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-5004

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Enzi:

As members of the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education Coalition, we are writing you with our recommendations for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), otherwise known as the No Child Left Behind Act. We look forward to working closely with you and the members of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) as you reauthorize this critical law.

Our Coalition is a broad alliance of education, business, professional, and science and technology organizations working aggressively to raise awareness in Congress, the Administration, and other organizations about the critical role that STEM education plays in enabling the U.S. to remain the economic and technological leader of the global marketplace of the 21st century.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, 15 of the 20 fastest growing occupations projected for 2014 require preparation in STEM subjects. If our nation is to keep up with our international peers, we absolutely must step up our efforts to improve STEM education.

Our Coalition includes a wide range of stakeholders who are deeply committed to ensuring that STEM education is a top priority in the revised ESEA. We urge you and your colleagues to strongly consider the following recommendations to improve the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. We support:

- The inclusion of student performance in science alongside math and reading as a core element of the accountability system;

- Robust and dedicated programs to provide effective STEM-related professional development and preparation for educators and other educational innovation activities under Title II.B;

- Strengthening STEM-focused formula-funded programs that provide resources to each state for high-need students and areas, complemented with competitive grant programs in STEM education to promote ambitious reform efforts;

- Federal efforts to empower each state to develop its own comprehensive STEM education action plan – including its own definition of STEM needs – that will include input from a wide range of business, professional, and education stakeholders;

- The integration of STEM-focused curricula, projects, and programs as high-priority allowable uses of funds under other ESEA programs that support classroom and field teaching and learning as well as out of school experiences such as afterschool and summer programs;

- A strong emphasis in K-12 learning environments on hands-on, experiential, inquiry-based and learner-centered student experiences and activities, including engineering design processes and digital access for STEM students and educators to help foster 21st Century skills;

- Federal efforts to encourage and foster ongoing collaborative state efforts to adopt "common core" or other high-quality standards in math and science;

- Targeted efforts to promote STEM subject master teachers and teacher specialists; and

- Federal efforts to expand the diversity of the STEM pipeline and workforce, including targeted initiatives to promote the inclusion of underrepresented minorities and women in STEM fields.

Our Coalition values our relationship with you and your HELP Committee colleagues. Please let us know if we can be of further assistance as you advance the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Please contact James Brown, Executive Director of the Coalition at (202) 223-1887 or jfbrown@stemedcoalition.org with questions, comments, or for further information.

Respectfully,

National Science Teachers Association
American Chemical Society
ASME
Education Development Center, Inc.
Hands on Science Partnership
Microsoft Corporation
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
Alliance for Science and Technology Research in America (ASTRA)
American Society for Engineering Education
American Society of Civil Engineers
Battelle
Business-Higher Education Forum
Campaign for Environment Literacy
Committee for the Advancement of STEM Specialty Schools
IEEE-USA
Afterschool Alliance
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE)

3-D Community Services and Housing
ACHIEVE3000
American Association of Physics Teachers
American Geophysical Union
American Institute of Biological Sciences
American Institute of Mining, Metallurgical, and Petroleum Engineers, Inc
American Institute of Physics
American Mathematical Association of Two-Year Colleges
American Museum of Natural History
American Nuclear Society
American Society for Microbiology
American Statistical Association
Arkansas STEM Coalition
Association of Science Materials Centers
Association of Science-Technology Centers
Automation Federation
Baltimore Washington Corridor Chamber
Beaver County STEM Education Advocacy Coalition
Biomedical Engineering Society (BMES)
C-54 Productions, LLC
California Healthcare Institute
Center for Excellence in Education (CEE)
Center for STEM Education at the University of North Carolina
Center for Teaching and Learning
Council of State Science Supervisors
Delaware Foundation for Science and Mathematics Education
EAST Initiative
Engineers Without Borders – USA
Entertainment Industries Council, Inc.
ETA/Cuisenaire
Funutation Tekademy LLC
Girls Inc.
In Reach, Inc.
Institute of Industrial Engineers
International Technology and Engineering Educators Association (ITEEA)
International Technology and Engineering Educators Association Council for Supervision and Leadership (ITEEA-CSL)
Iowa Mathematics & Science Education Partnership
KDSL-Know Do Serve Learn
Knowledge Alliance
Maryland Academy of Sciences at The Maryland Science Center
McGraw-Hill Education
Michigan Mathematics and Science Center Network
Minnesota High Tech Association
MITS, Inc
Muses3, LLC
National Association for Gifted Children
National Center for Science Education
National Commission on Teaching and America's Future
National Council for Advanced Manufacturing
National Council of Structural Engineers Associations
National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics
National Defense Industrial Association
National Institute of Building Sciences
National Science Education Leadership Association
National Wildlife Federation
New York Hall of Science
Northrop Grumman Corporation
NV STEM Education Coalition
Pathways into Science
Payson Unified School District #10
Project Exploration
SACNAS
School Management and Revitalize Training Group
School Science and Mathematics Association (SSMA)
Scientifically Connected Communities (SC2) at New Mexico State University
SkillsNET Corporation
South Carolina's Coalition for Mathematics & Science
SparkFun Electronics
SPIE, the International Society for Optics and Photonics
STEM Education Center, University of Minnesota
Students 2 Science, Inc.
Technology Student Association
The 21st Century Partnership for STEM Education
The American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA)
The AWE Project (Assessing Women and Men in Engineering)
The Council of Presidential Awardees in Mathematics
The Laboratory School for Science and Technology
The National Society of Professional Engineers
The Ohio Academy of Science
The Optical Society
Triangle Coalition
Urban STEM Strategy Group
Vernier Software & Technology
Wings of Eagles Discover Center