

EDUCATION & LABOR COMMITTEE

Congressman George Miller, Chairman

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Chairman Miller Statement at Committee Hearing on “Innovation in Education through Business and Education STEM Partnerships”

WASHINGTON, D.C. – *Below are the prepared remarks of U.S. Rep. George Miller (D-CA), the chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, for a committee hearing on “Innovation in Education through Business and Education STEM Partnerships.”*

Good afternoon.

Welcome to our hearing on “Innovation in Education through Business and Education STEM Partnerships.”

Today we will examine how business-education partnerships are helping drive innovation and strengthen science, technology, engineering, and math education in our schools – fields that we know U.S. students have been falling behind in for some time now.

In May, this Committee held a hearing on a recent report by the National Mathematics Advisory Panel that found that our nation’s system for teaching math is “broken and must be fixed” if we are to maintain our competitive edge.

During that hearing, we heard over and over again that we are not giving our teachers the training and support needed to provide effective math instruction.

Simply put, we cannot expect our teachers to teach what they themselves do not know.

The panel recommends, among other things, improving teacher training and professional development and providing ongoing support for teachers.

I am a firm believer that the best thing we can do to help our children succeed in math, science, and every other subject is to invest more in the success of their teachers.

One of our witnesses, John Castellani of the Business Roundtable, captured it especially well. He said that expanding the talent pool of Americans with a firm grounding in math and science is a critical element of the innovation agenda that our nation needs to pursue in order to remain competitive in the 21st century.

The business community can – and should – play a key role in this effort.

As he went on to highlight, there are many innovative examples of how businesses are teaming up with the education sector to bolster math and science education.

For example, Texas Instruments has created a Math Scholars program that uses technology to improve the professional development of math and science teachers. The company has also partnered with the CBS television show NUMBERS, which features a mathematician working with his FBI agent brother to solve crimes.

ExxonMobil has partnered with Phil and Amy Mickelson to work on closing the math and science achievement gap between U.S. students and their international peers.

The Phil Mickelson Exxon Mobil Teachers Academy provides teachers of third, fourth, and fifth graders with the professional development training, knowledge and skills needed to boost students' interest in math and science careers.

And the National Math and Science Initiative is working with states to increase the number of students taking and passing AP courses, and to expand the highly-successful UTeach program, which encourages math and science majors to become teachers.

Today we will hear directly from some of the business leaders who are paving the way for these and other exciting initiatives that will bring STEM education to the next level.

At a time when other countries are stepping up to the plate to challenge our nation's global leadership, the National Math Panel's Report was a sobering wake-up call.

Over the past two years, this Congress has taken important first steps to invest in and strengthen math and science education.

Last year we enacted the America COMPETES Act, which improves teacher education in STEM fields, and establishes public private partnerships between colleges and businesses to educate and train mathematicians, scientists and engineers, among other things.

We also enacted TEACH Grants that provide up-front tuition assistance of \$4,000 each year for outstanding students who commit to teaching math, science, and other high-need subjects in high need schools – a benefit that students will start receiving this fall.

But, as the math panel's report reminds us, there is still a great deal of work ahead.

For starters, both the business community and Congress must re-double our efforts to do all we can to make strong math and science education a focal point in our schools.

I hope that today's hearing helps continue to drive the comprehensive, systemic reforms and investments that we know are needed to truly improve math and science education in this country.

Thank you.

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