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July 26, 2012

The Honorable Gene Dodaro
Comptroller General
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) recently reported the federal government spent more than \$3 billion on more than 200 federally funded science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education programs across 13 federal agencies in fiscal year 2011.¹ While it is important to have a prepared and appropriately targeted STEM workforce to enhance U.S. competitiveness, little is known about the overall effectiveness of the federal education effort. Despite this, the administration continues to offer various initiatives and programs, the latest being a \$100 million effort to support a STEM Master Teacher Corps.

Before the Department of Education or any federal agency creates an additional STEM initiative, Congress and the administration should have a better understanding of what employers need from the STEM workforce. American workers must be prepared for these demanding fields, but many federal programs lack the performance metrics to determine whether they have been successful in preparing workers for jobs in fields that are in demand. In fact, a recent article in the *Washington Post* noted the federal government continues to push students to enter the STEM field, but questions whether there will be jobs available for them when they graduate.²

To get a better understanding of the needs within each of the various STEM sectors, we respectfully request a review of the latest STEM education and workforce trends, including:

1. A review of recent trends in the numbers and characteristics of students, graduates, and employees in selected STEM fields.

¹ GAO, *Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education: Strategic Planning Needed to Better Manager Overlapping Programs across Multiple Agencies*, GAO-12-108, Jan. 20, 2012.

² Vastag, Brian, "U.S. pushes for more scientists, but the jobs aren't there," *Washington Post*, July 7, 2012.

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2. An evaluation of the workforce trends in selected STEM fields and a determination of whether federal STEM education and workforce programs are aligned with the needs of those sectors, including whether those programs are nimble enough to adapt to the changing needs of the sectors.

3. A discussion of how federal programs support state and local education efforts to prepare elementary and secondary students to further their studies and employment in STEM-related fields.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions about this request, please contact Mandy Schaumburg with the committee staff at (202) 225-6558 or mandy.schaumburg@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,



JOHN KLINE

Chairman

Committee on Education and the Workforce



DUNCAN HUNTER

Chairman

Subcommittee on Early Childhood,
Elementary, and Secondary Education



RICHARD L. HANNA

Member of Congress



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