



National Panel of Experts: U.S. Is Squandering Its Most Promising Students

WASHINGTON (September 15, 2010) – An extensive, multi-year review by a panel of experts in science and math education has concluded the U.S. has failed to identify and develop our most promising students, crippling the nation's ability to produce the next generation of innovators.

Preparing the Next Generation of Stem Innovators: Identifying and Developing our Nation's Human Capital, released today by the National Science Board (NSB), paints a bleak picture of an education system that, over the past 50 years, has devolved from recognizing the fundamental need to identify and cultivate the talents of our high-ability students to one that ignores excellence and focuses disproportionately on basic skills.

"The NSB report confirms that our nation is neglecting the needs of our most promising and gifted students and that this neglect is hindering our ability to compete effectively in an increasingly competitive global economy," said Ann Robinson, president of the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC).

"The report recognizes that while our nation's future innovation requires attention from many stakeholders and sectors, it is an obligation first and foremost for our education system. If we fail to identify and cultivate our most promising minds beginning as early as possible, we will squander this talent and cripple our ability to compete and thrive in the years and decades to come," Robinson added.

Preparing the Next Generation of STEM Innovators makes a clear call for action focused on three core goals: providing opportunities for excellence, casting a wide net to identify talent, and fostering an education ecosystem that supports our future STEM innovators.

"As the leading national voice for identifying all high-potential students, for developing and celebrating excellence, and for ensuring all educators are well-prepared to meet the needs of our most advanced students, NAGC strongly supports the recommendations and looks forward to working with the administration, Congress, and others to implement them," said Robinson.

The NSB recommends a number of specific policy strategies to respond to the crisis, including:

- Better preparing teachers and others who are responsible for children in schools to notice and nurture early signs of high ability;
- Holding schools accountable for the achievement of students performing at the top levels, just as schools must now be held accountable for low-performing students; and
- Providing federal support to advance programs proven to develop future STEM innovators.

The report also addresses the clear need to focus on identifying talent in economically disadvantaged communities and among minority students, two sectors that for far too long have been overlooked.

"No students should have their potential go unnoticed year after year simply because of where they live or what they look like or how much their family earns. We can – and must – do a better job identifying and serving all of these students," said Robinson.

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