



## STEM Update:

### **Results from Math And Science Partnerships Indicate Why Congress Should Keep them Funded May 1, 2008**

The latest results from the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Math and Science Partnership (MSP) program show not only improved proficiency among all elementary and middle school students, but also a closing of the achievement gaps between both African-American and Hispanic students and white students in elementary school math, and between African-American and white students in elementary and middle-school science.

The current results are drawn from schools whose MSP projects target specific improvements in their math and/or science programs. The data used are student scores on state proficiency tests in math and science collected over three different school years. The figures show how student subgroups within MSP projects focused on math improvements performed on math tests in the 2003-2004 and 2005-2006 school years, respectively. Among approximately 39,000 students at 160 schools, the scores of white students performing at or above the proficient level rose 4.6 percentage points between the 2003-2004 and the 2005-2006 school years. Meanwhile, the results for Hispanic and African-American students went a long way towards closing an identified achievement gap. The percentage of Hispanic students performing at or above proficient rose by 18.3 percentage points--from 35.9 to 54.2 percent--and those of African-American students rose by 17.9 points--from 27.6 to 45.5 percent. Although small in number, Asian-American students, special education students, and students with limited English proficiency also showed gains.

The rise in science scores among elementary students within MSP projects focused on science improvements was not quite as pronounced, as shown in the figure at right, with the percentage of Hispanic students scoring at or above proficient rising by 6.5 percentage points, those of African-American students by 15.8, and those of white students by 12.2. Science testing is not mandated in all states, and there was a smaller universe of schools--96 schools, with assessments for only 7,500 students--reporting science proficiency results. However, science testing promises to be an area of increasing focus in the states, because the *No Child Left Behind* act requires that all states implement science testing by 2009.

- ✓ **Full Funding of the America Competes Act passed in 2007 would guarantee the continuation and expansion of these proven programs.**

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