

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

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May 1, 2024

The Honorable Arati Prabhakar
Director
White House Office of Science and Technology Policy
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Director Prabhakar,

I write to express concern over the delayed release of the Office of Science and Technology Policy's (OSTP) five-year Federal Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education Strategic Plan for 2023-2028. OSTP has failed to deliver resources that are both mandated by law and critical to America's economy. It is Congress' intent, established under the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010,¹ for OSTP to dutifully develop and implement, through participating agencies, a five-year STEM education strategic plan once every five years.² The 2023-2028 STEM education strategic plan was due no later than December 31, 2023.

A robust STEM workforce is the backbone of our nation's economy and demand is growing. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that STEM occupations in the U.S. will increase by 10 percent by 2032, compared to only a 2 percent increase in non-STEM occupations.³ These are high-quality jobs where the median annual wage of a STEM job is more than double that of a non-STEM job.⁴ As the demand for high-wage, high-skill jobs increases and the STEM workforce gap widens, our country's competitive edge relies on our already significant federal investments in STEM education and workforce development. These investments include over 200 programs across more than 20 agencies that look to OSTP's leadership and timely guidance for coordination and direction.

The CHIPS and Science Act of 2022⁵ includes many activities to address this pressing need for STEM education and workforce development. One such provision focuses on expanding and sustaining access to high-quality STEM education for rural students, which is of particular

¹ [P.L. 111-358](#).

² 42 U.S.C. § 6621(b)(5)

³ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment in STEM occupations*, April 17, 2024, available at <https://www.bls.gov/emp/tables/stem-employment.htm#2>.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ [P.L. 117-167](#).

importance to me. These rural investments serve to capture the geographic diversity of talent that is key to addressing the need for a larger domestic STEM workforce in the future. Rural areas represent one of the greatest, yet underutilized, opportunities for STEM education to impact workforce development.⁶ Rural Americans are frequently overlooked when we discuss underserved STEM communities. While the 2023 progress report provides information on the activities of the Interagency Working Group on Inclusion in STEM, it fails to highlight any work done to increase the geographic diversity of STEM talent. However, it is my hope that the new five-year STEM strategy will include a plan to activate the talent within America's rural communities, as well as across the country.

While we are grateful for the release of the 2023 Progress Report on the Implementation of the 2018 STEM Strategic Plan, the updated plan is now four months overdue. Please provide a briefing to my staff on the anticipated timeline for the next five-year strategic plans, as well as provide written responses to the following questions no later than May 8, 2024:

1. When will OSTP publish the Federal STEM Education Strategic Plan for 2023-2028?
2. Following the passage of the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022, how does OSTP plan to incorporate those congressional priorities and mandates into the new 5-year plan?
3. The 2023 progress report mentions the development of an October 2022 document summarizing key takeaways from a virtual roundtable on *Inclusive Hiring Practices to Support the Recruitment and Selection of Federal STEM Talent*. Please provide a copy of this document.
4. Since the formation of the Interagency Working Group on Inclusion STEM, what efforts have been made to increase the geographic diversity of STEM talent?

We thank you for your attention to this matter and look forward to working with you to preserve and advance our STEM ecosystem. If you have any questions, please contact Victoria Rubin of the House Science Committee's Majority staff at (202) 225-6371.

Sincerely,



Frank Lucas
Chairman
House Committee on Science,
Space, and Technology

cc: The Honorable Zoe Lofgren
Ranking Member
House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

⁶ Kate Kastelein, Sue Allen, Thomas Keller, & Jan Mokros, *The 2018 Rural Informal STEM Conference: Final Report*, Maine Mathematics and Science Alliance, 2018, at <https://www.mmsa.org/projects/RuralConference2018>.