STEM SUMMITS

STEM Summit V:
Implementing the Plan
Preparing Massachusetts students for careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics

Gaining Momentum, Losing Ground
Excerpts from Tapping America's Potential (TAP) Progress Report, 2008

In July 2005, Business Roundtable and fifteen of America's most prominent business organizations – Tapping America's Potential, the TAP coalition – issued a report stating that "one of the pillars of American economic prosperity – U.S. scientific and technological superiority – is beginning to atrophy even as other nations are developing their own human capital."

TAP established the goal of increasing the annual number of U.S. science, technology, engineering and math bachelor's level graduates to 400,000 by 2015 (double the number that graduated in 2005). The TAP report laid out a series of concrete recommendations to achieve the goal.

In 2007, Congress enacted landmark legislation – the America COMPETES Act – authorizing major new federal investments in math and science education, teacher recruitment and training, and science and engineering research…Congress failed, however, to fund the America COMPETES Act in the annual appropriations process last year. Congress did include additional funds for science and engineering research in the emergency supplemental spending bill approved last month, but the overall level for the current fiscal year is still well below what was included in the President's budget request.

Expanding home-grown talent is TAP's number one priority, however the original TAP report also called upon policy makers to reform visa and green card policies to better attract the best and the brightest from around the world.

TAP's priorities include:

1. Funding basic science and engineering research at U.S. universities at the levels authorized in the America COMPETES Act

2. Funding STEM education programs at the levels authorized in the America COMPETES Act, including funds for expanding the Robert Noyce Scholarship Program at NSF, Math and Science Partnerships (MSP) programs at both NSF and the Department of Education, Math Now, Adjunct Teacher Corps, and programs to develop and expand Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs;
3. Enacting targeted reforms to welcome more highly educated foreign-born professionals into the United States; and

4. Complementing federal action with state, local and private-sector initiatives.

For the full report, go to: http://www.tap2015.org/news/tap_2008_progress.pdf