



**WEA**  
WASHINGTON  
EDUCATION  
ASSOCIATION

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Mary Lindquist, President  
Mike Ragan, Vice President  
John Okamoto, Executive Director

May 28, 2008

Tom Luce, Chief Executive Officer  
National Math & Science Initiative  
325 N. St Paul Street Suite 2900  
Dallas, Texas 75201

Dear Mr. Luce:

I am writing to express the extreme disappointment of members of the Washington Education Association over NMSI's decision to reject common sense and reasonable approaches to enhance learning opportunities for students in Washington state.

We are further disappointed that NMSI appears bent on an adversarial approach, instead of embracing teachers and their representatives as partners in improving education. Our public schools are underfunded, and elements of the NMSI program would have benefited our students. NMSI's recalcitrant approach denied those students this opportunity.

The Washington Education Association's 81,000 members are the teachers, support professionals and college faculty who work with Washington's public school students every day. We are committed to ensuring all Washington students meet our state's high academic standards.

Let me be clear that WEA members are committed to quality education for all students. Statements made to the contrary are simply not true and offensive.

Classroom teachers and school administrators in the Evergreen, Central Valley, Seattle and Spokane school districts spent hundreds of hours to respond in good faith to your grant, only to find their proposals rejected on rigid and narrow rationale. Advanced Placement teachers and their representatives in Spokane and Seattle, in conjunction with their district administrators, worked tirelessly to accommodate the NMSI grant proposal requirements which were not detailed in the initial application.

Based on their real life experience and the legitimate needs of their local students, teachers and district officials proposed changes that would have benefited students and staff alike. For example, NMSI insisted on paying teachers a \$100 bounty every time a student passed an AP math or science test. In Seattle, the teachers believed that money would be better spent on staff development. Teachers also tried to get NMSI approval for dedicating that money to a student scholarship fund. In Spokane, the teachers and district were prepared to provide additional compensation to teachers based upon an improvement over years in student AP tests. Each of these options was rejected by NMSI.

NMSI was unwilling to compromise and refused to consider changes. NMSI's approach ignored the professional judgment of local teachers and would have bypassed locally elected school boards and overridden legally binding collective bargaining agreements.

Further, NMSI's rigid proposal to pay teachers for student tests scores is not well grounded in research. On the other hand, numerous studies show a strong correlation between highly qualified teachers and improved student performance.

Classroom teachers, association leaders, school district administrators and elected officials here in Washington spent hundreds of hours working to craft an AP program that would meet the needs of *our* students. Unfortunately, NMSI remained rigid and inflexible on several key issues.

NMSI has exhibited the same intransigence over similar elements in Connecticut and Massachusetts.

Improving student achievement is a collective responsibility, involving educators, families, elected leaders and the business community. It cannot rest with a single group. Members of the Washington Education Association are proud of our collaborative work with other community groups and organizations. We've made significant progress. By working together, we have established, funded and implemented programs that improve student achievement.

Our door remains open to any party willing to help improve education in our state, but we expect a relationship built on trust, respect and collaboration.

Sincerely,



Mary Lindquist  
President

cc: NMSI Board of Directors:  
Bruce Alberts  
Norm Augustine  
Gov. Gaston Caperton  
Steven Chu  
Roger A. Enrico  
Nancy Grasmick  
Bernard Harris, Jr., MD  
Susan Hockfield  
Diana Natalicio  
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