

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074

MINORITY (202) 225-5051

<http://oversight.house.gov>

July 5, 2016

The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro
Comptroller General of the United States
Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

Federal science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education programs can serve an important role by preparing students for careers in STEM fields and increasing the nation's global competitiveness. Like all government programs, STEM education programs are most effective and efficient when they minimize overlap and duplication of their goals, activities, and beneficiaries.

Prior GAO work found more than 200 federally funded STEM education programs across 13 agencies, with obligations of more than \$3 billion in fiscal year 2010.¹ Two years later, the number of STEM education programs had fallen to 158 and obligations reduced to under \$2.6 billion.² According to the Administration's 2017 budget proposal, the number of programs has been further reduced by 40 percent since 2012, and agencies are continuing to look for internal consolidations that could increase the effectiveness of their STEM investments.³

To ensure that the changes to the nation's investment in federal STEM education programs improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the overall federal effort, it is important for Congress to better understand the changes being made and how agencies are determining which programs to consolidate and eliminate, as well as their rationale for creating new programs. For that reason, we request that the GAO review the recent changes to the landscape of federal STEM programs, including:

¹ GAO, *Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education: Strategic Planning Needed to Better Manage Overlapping Programs across Multiple Agencies*, GAO-14-374 (Washington, D.C.: Jan. 20, 2012).

² GAO, *Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education: Assessing the Relationship between Education and the Workforce*, GAO-14-374 (Washington, D.C.: May 8, 2014).

³ Executive Office of the President, Office of Science and Technology Policy, *Progress Report on Coordinating Federal Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education*, (Washington, D.C.: March 31, 2016).

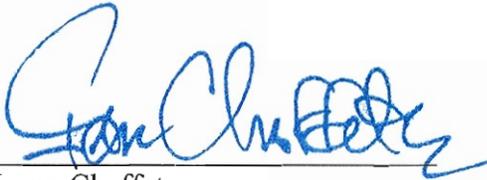
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1. Analysis of the changes in the federal STEM landscape since fiscal year 2010, including
 - a. major programs that have been consolidated, eliminated, or created;
 - b. reallocations of responsibilities and funding among agencies that fund STEM education programs; and
 - c. changes in the focus areas of federal STEM education programs, if any; and
2. The rationale behind major changes, including any evidence of improved efficiency or performance as a consequence of the changes.

If you have any questions about this request, please contact Katie Bailey of the Majority staff at (202) 225-5074 or Christy Gamble of the Minority staff at 225-5051. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.



Jason Chaffetz
Chairman

Sincerely,



Elijah E. Cummings
Ranking Member