



Open Letter from 100Kin10: If We Want to Promote Innovation, We Must Support Teachers

There are frontiers, on the edge of what we know, where we are learning. Here, in contact with the ocean of the unknown, shines the mystery and the beauty of the world. And it's breathtaking. – Adapted from Carlo Rovelli

It is hard to think of a more urgent priority for the country and planet than science, technology, engineering, and math (or STEM) education. Our most pressing challenges—from climate change to economic growth and advancing opportunity—and our most potent opportunities require problem-solvers and innovators equipped with STEM skills. Knowledge in math, technology, and the sciences, pure and applied, is central to the jobs of tomorrow; indeed, ten of the top 14 fastest-growing industries require STEM training.

Fortunately, our country was founded on innovation. We are a nation of problem-solvers and tinkerers, of dreamers and trailblazers.

To produce big ideas, solve our biggest challenges, and keep America competitive on a global scale, students need excellent educations—in STEM especially. As leaders deeply invested in the 100Kin10 effort—a nonpartisan, multi-sector, national network committed to recruiting and preparing 100,000 excellent K-12 STEM teachers by 2021—we know that teachers are the cornerstone of our education system. Teachers support and inspire millions of children every day. Teachers produce the future's doctors, engineers, architects, inventors, entrepreneurs, and, of course, educators; they power the possible and empower future generations to imagine and achieve what now seems impossible.

Yet many STEM teachers aren't receiving the essential preparation, resources, and encouragement to do their jobs effectively. In fact, we face a great shortage of qualified STEM teachers nationwide. This need for excellent STEM teachers long preceded the most recent election, and, if we don't all take action, it will extend well beyond the next four years.

That's why [100Kin10](#) formed, stirred to action by a call in President Obama's 2011 [State of the Union address](#) and by decades of research pointing to STEM teachers as the critical lynchpin to securing America's future well-being. This ever-present need for excellent STEM teaching is why some of the country's most innovative, powerful, and forward-thinking people and organizations came together five years ago and committed to improving STEM education across the country. To bring about the kind of change and support we need in our STEM education system, it's going to take an all-hands-on-deck approach.

In just a few years, we have trained over 40,000 new STEM teachers, inspired nearly 300 best-in-class organizations to make and fulfill commitments, launched an annual [Fellowship Program](#), delivered just under \$400,000 to fuel nearly 90 collaborations, and awarded over \$6 million in grants to seed new innovations. But we have many obstacles to tackle, and 100Kin10 and our allies understand that reaching this ambitious goal requires identifying and addressing the deep-rooted, systemic challenges

that have plagued our education system for decades, including the underrepresentation of women and minorities in STEM fields; lack-luster enrollment for teacher-preparation programs; the high rate of teacher leavers; and an acute need for more early childhood STEM education.

We the undersigned are proud to be part of a robust network of STEM education advocates and experts that transcends party lines, sectors, and generations—for the future of STEM affects us all. In a polarized country, STEM education is one of the few nonpartisan, multi-sector, urgent issues of our time. We are committed to playing our part. We are on track to reach our goal of preparing 100,000 new STEM teachers by 2021—and we will do whatever it takes to ensure a strong STEM education for all children across America.

Sincerely,

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