

MARK TAKANO
41ST DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

DC OFFICE
1507 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
PHONE: (202) 225-2305
FAX: (202) 225-7018

DISTRICT OFFICE
3403 10TH ST., STE 610
RIVERSIDE, CA 92501
(951) 222-0203

TAKANO.HOUSE.GOV

November 12, 2014

Ms. Sarah K. McDonald, Acting Division Director
National Science Foundation
Division of Research on Learning in Formal and Informal Settings (EHR/DRL)
4201 Wilson Blvd.
Arlington, VA 22230

Dear Ms. McDonald,

I am writing in support of a proposal Riverside Unified School District's (RUSD) Educational Options Center in Riverside, California for the Advancing Informal Stem Learning (AISL) grant offered through the National Science Foundation.

The objective of AISL projects is to promote and build on STEM education to diverse participants. The Educational Options Center is a K-12 facility that serves students in Riverside, California. Research and experience has shown us the ability to pursue mathematics is primarily driven by desire. Unfortunately, students spend many years learning math without a creative avenue for the application of those reasoning skills. One way to promote these reasoning skills is through computer programming that can be used in artistic pursuits such as video production, game design, and laboratory-based science. This program will provide students with hands-on project-based learning linking mathematical reasoning and practical applications. This will help promote the retention of students in STEM-related disciplines.

According to the Public Policy Institution of California, the percentage of students from Riverside County is considerably below the state average in terms of both general education requirement rates and in terms of postsecondary enrollment. As RUSD provides public education to a large percentage of the students in my district, it is imperative that new ways to engage students in high level academic pursuits, especially those that develop 21st Century skills like programing and digital art, are designed, funded, and evaluated for success. The AISL grant will provide funding for and research directed toward providing this much needed education.

I share your strong commitment to enhancing STEM learning for all students. Your full and fair consideration of this request with current laws, rules, regulations and agency policy, will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark Takano".

Mark Takano
Member of Congress