

March 6, 2007



Dear State Directors, Supervisors and Friends of Science Olympiad,

I was delighted to be asked to write a short note of introduction to ***Innovation America: Building a Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Agenda***, a report released February 27, 2007, during the National Governors Association Winter Conference in Washington, DC.

This document, written by the NGA Center for Best Practices, is data-driven and suggests several thought-provoking strategies. As I read through Recommendation #2 (Examine and increase the state's capacity to implement a rigorous aligned STEM education system statewide to improve teaching and learning) and Strategy #7 (Support STEM education outside the classroom via expanded learning opportunities that develop and maintain student interest; *Science Olympiad is mentioned here*), I was struck by a sense of déjà vu.

At the opening ceremonies of the 2002 Science Olympiad National Tournament in Newark, Delaware, President and CEO of DuPont Charles Holliday, who sits on the Innovation America Task Force, spoke eloquently on a subject obviously near and dear to his heart. In his speech to nearly 4,000 students, parents and educators, he said, "These competitions provide students with real world challenges and allow students to build, tinker, design, and problem solve while learning deep content understanding of the problem at hand." That sentiment is echoed precisely in the ***Innovation America*** report on Page 17, and we couldn't agree more!

Science Olympiad is a model recognized for its many strengths by millions of students and teachers and now by the National Governors Association. Please take time to review the report and make use of its high points to spread the word to your colleagues, school boards, community and business leaders and local media that Science Olympiad is a key part of the national conversation on science innovation.

Sincerely,

Jack Cairns
Co-Founder
Science Olympiad

###

The National Governors Association's Innovation America initiative focuses on strengthening our competitive position in the global economy by improving our capacity to innovate. The goal is to give governors the tools they need to encourage entrepreneurship, improve math and science education, better align post-secondary education systems with local economic growth, and develop regional innovation strategies.

To guide the Innovation America initiative, Co-Chairs Governor Janet Napolitano, Arizona, and Governor Tim Pawlenty, Minnesota, assembled a bipartisan task force of governors and members of the academic and business communities. Working with the NGA Center for Best Practices, the task force is developing innovation-based education and economic strategies. Through a variety of forums and publications, the task force will collect and share best practice information to ensure every state - and the nation - is equipped to excel in the global economy. For more information, see www.nga.org or call (202) 624-5300.