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**NAPE REPORT INDICATES MISSED OPPORTUNITY TO PREPARE  
WOMEN AND GIRLS FOR STEM CAREERS**

**COCHRANVILLE, PA (3/29/11) ---** States' plans to use federal Race to the Top funds to prepare underrepresented students for advanced study and careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) continue to fall short of the mark, according to the findings of a new report.

“False Start: A Missed Opportunity for Women and Girls in STEM in the Race to the Top Awards” – a report released today by The National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE) – concludes that states generally misunderstood the requirements necessary for developing a high-quality STEM plan that addresses the needs of women and girls.

To meet the requirements for using Race to the Top funds, states must have a plan that: offers a rigorous course of STEM study; involves cooperation among various stakeholders to improve STEM content and instruction; *and* prepares more students by addressing the needs of underrepresented groups, and of women and girls, for advanced study and careers in STEM.

“When the Race to the Top application was released by the U.S. Department of Education, we were ecstatic that this Administration had chosen to include a priority focused on women and girls in STEM – a policy that we consider necessary and important to create the next generation of innovators in the U.S. economy,” says Mimi Lufkin, Chief Executive Officer of NAPE.

The egregious state of STEM education in the U.S. can be largely explained by the lagging achievement of underrepresented students.

NAPE undertook this project to inform its work with education systems. That work includes: increasing the participation of underrepresented students and of women and girls in STEM education; answering questions raised during a listening session conducted by the Girls in STEM Collaboration ([www.stemcollaboration.org](http://www.stemcollaboration.org)); and assisting the U.S. Department of Education in its ongoing review of its competitive grants programs.

“The state applications for developing STEM plans ranged from not addressing the requirements at all to describing programs and practices that have proven to be effective,” says Lufkin. “Reviewers differed in their interpretation of the degree to which a state had to prove its capacity to increase the access and success of underrepresented students in STEM. Therefore, varying opinions about the adequacy, or even the necessity, of addressing the requirements may have affected the scoring.”

As a result, the NAPE report recommends that states reach out to organizations that have already demonstrated expertise in creating successful outcomes for women and girls and other

underrepresented groups in STEM education. States should seek innovative funding to support such collaborations.

“There are fantastic programs all around this country that have proven to be effective in engaging women and girls in STEM education and careers. States need to take advantage of this expertise and include them in their Race to the Top implementation efforts – it’s not too late!” says Lufkin.

NAPE developed a set of recommendations for the U.S. Department of Education that address the selection and training of reviewers, the use of current research to inform reviewers about best practices, and use of specialists to review scoring of priorities.

The NAPE report also expressed hopes that the Obama Administration will reinforce its commitment to ensure the full participation and achievement of underrepresented students and of women and girls in STEM by including a similar criterion in all future funding opportunities.

### **About NAPE**

NAPE is a national, nonprofit consortium of state and local agencies, corporations, and national organizations that collaborate to create equitable and diverse classrooms and workplaces where there are no barriers to opportunities. The NAPE Education Foundation has been involved in a number of initiatives to increase diversity in America’s workforce and to increase opportunities in high-skill, high-wage, high-demand careers. Among these is the National Science Foundation-funded STEM Equity Pipeline Project, which works with educational systems to increase the participation of underrepresented populations in STEM education. For more information, visit [www.napequity.org](http://www.napequity.org) and [www.stemequitypipeline.org](http://www.stemequitypipeline.org).