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## National PTA White Paper Reveals Families are Essential to Bridge STEM Gap

ALEXANDRIA, Va., (July 11, 2016)—National PTA announced today the release of a [white paper](#) on the essential role of family engagement in increasing students' access to opportunities in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM)—especially among girls and underrepresented youth. The white paper is the result of an analysis of STEM education research and STEM programs; a panel discussion with PTA members and STEM education and equity experts; and a convening of thought leaders in STEM, family engagement and education.

"STEM jobs in the United States are growing twice as fast as other fields. As a result, the demand for qualified STEM professionals is high, but the supply of qualified STEM workers is low—especially among underrepresented groups like minorities and women," said Laura Bay, president of National PTA. "The gap in the STEM pipeline is not a new problem, but intentionally engaging families is an essential new solution."

Among the findings highlighted in the report:

- Families are unaware of the vast career opportunities in STEM and rely on their own experiences with STEM subjects to guide perceptions about STEM for their children
- Families are not equipped to support STEM education decision-making or to guide their children toward STEM career pathways
- Families have not been empowered to advocate for high-quality STEM education and programs for all students in school, home, community or digital settings

"We know—and decades of research proves—that family engagement is essential to children's success. We also know that families play an important role in helping students navigate educational and career decisions and are influencers of students' perceptions of what's possible for their futures," said Nathan R. Monell, CAE, National PTA executive director. "Shifting the conversation to include families as meaningful partners in STEM education and career pathways is critical to bridging the STEM gap."

The white paper is part of National PTA's new [STEM Plus Families](#) initiative. National PTA launched *STEM Plus Families* with the founding support of Bayer USA Foundation and Mathnasium. Bayer is the lead corporate supporter for the "S" in STEM, and Mathnasium is providing support for the "M."

"Families are critical to nurturing a child's interest in STEM subjects during school and, eventually, pursuing a STEM career," said Dr. Mae C. Jemison, ambassador of Bayer's Making Science Making Sense® science literacy program. "The findings of National PTA's *STEM Plus Families* white paper support this position as well as the direct positive correlation between robust STEM careers and the long-term prosperity of the United States."

#### About National PTA

[National PTA](#)® comprises millions of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business and community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and the promotion of family engagement in schools. PTA is a registered 501(c) (3) nonprofit association that prides itself on being a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families and communities, and a strong advocate for public education. Membership in PTA is open to anyone who wants to be involved and make a difference for the education, health and welfare of children and youth.

**About Bayer Corporation**

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**About Mathnasium**

[Mathnasium](http://Mathnasium.com), the nation's leading math-only learning center franchise, specializes in teaching kids math in a way that makes sense to them. The result of 40+ years of instruction and research, the Mathnasium Method has transformed the way children understand and appreciate math—whether they're ahead of the curve, performing at grade level, or falling behind. Franchising since 2003, Mathnasium has become one of the fastest-growing educational franchises, with a new center opening each week. There are more than 700 Mathnasium franchises in the U.S. and abroad. For more information, visit [Mathnasium.com](http://Mathnasium.com) or call (877) 601-MATH.

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