

Congressman Brian Baird  
3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District, Washington State  
**For Immediate Release: February 1, 2006**  
**Contact: Meghan O'Shaughnessy**  
**(202) 225-3536 (o)**  
**(202) 557-0165 (c)**

**Rep. Baird Highlights Science/Math Partnership  
Between Vancouver Business, Local Schools**

**Washington, DC** – Congressman Brian Baird today spoke at a Capitol Hill briefing on the importance of public-private partnerships in math and science education. Congressman Baird, a member of the House Science Committee and former college professor, highlighted the successful partnership between Southwest Washington business, nLight, and local AP physics students during his talk.

**“As a former educator, I know firsthand the value of providing students with outlets for real-world experience. In this ever-evolving high-tech world it is important our young people will be able to successfully tackle careers in engineering, physics, and biotechnology. The partnership between nLight and our local students has proven enormously successful in that regard,”** said Congressman Baird. **“With Asia and Europe graduating thousands more science and math students than the United States every year, we need to do everything we can to engage our students in science and math studies.”**

During the briefing, Congressman Baird discussed the Mentoring Advanced Placement Programs (MAPP) pilot program pioneered by Vancouver laser diode manufacturer nLight, the Southwest Washington Development Council, Educational Services District 112, and seven local high schools. The program partners PhD physicists and engineers with AP physics students to provide students with opportunities to apply classroom concepts to real world problem-solving, as well as career advice, internship options, and potential scholarship opportunities. The program has been so successful that local schools and nLight are planning to extend the program to include mentoring for all AP courses, including calculus and chemistry.

**“We compete in a global market and we believe it is absolutely critical to do everything we can to ensure students are well prepared,”** said Scott Keeney, CEO of nLight. **“Our team has very much enjoyed working with both students and teachers in our local schools, and we look forward to expanding the program to including more companies and schools next year.”**

A broad range of companies, trade associations, and NGOs support science, technology, engineering, and math education programs across the United States. From helping with curriculum development to supplying classroom technology resources, to conducting

teacher-training seminars, to sponsoring science competitions, public-private education partnerships are working to help improve the quality of education programs.

In 2002, Congressman Baird introduced and helped pass the Science Undergraduate Community College Education Enhancement Act (SUCCEED) to improve the quality of core science and math education at community colleges. In 2005, Congressman Baird cosponsored the “10,000 Teachers, 10 Million Minds” Science and Math Scholarships Act to increase the number of U.S. science and math teachers by 10,000 annually through scholarship incentives.

In addition to Congressman Baird, House Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM) Education Caucus Co-chairs, Congressmen Vernon Ehlers (R-MI) and Mark Udall (D-CO), and representatives from the Discovery Channel, Intel, and the Society of Automotive also delivered remarks. Mary Kirchhoff, Director of the Office of Education at the American Chemical Society moderated the event.

###