

## Letters To The Editor

### STEM Education, Leavened by the Arts

To the Editor:

Joseph Piro's Commentary "Going From STEM to STEAM" (March 10, 2010) makes it clear that the country can better position itself for global advantage when the arts are an integral part of the educational equation, which is now so often dominated by science, technology, engineering, and math.

President Barack Obama has rightly said that "reaffirming and strengthening America's role as the world's engine of scientific discovery and technological innovation is essential to meeting the challenges of this century." But in order to achieve this innovation, citizens' "right brain" skills of the imagination will need to be cultivated.

Pollsters from the left, right,

and center all affirm that this imaginative capacity is the asset Americans prize most—and most fear is missing today. Research from my own organization has found that 59 percent of us are afraid the country is losing its global dominance in innovation. Building students' imaginative power is essential both to their engagement in school and to national innovation.

The business community has told us it needs a creative workforce. Because the abilities to problem-solve and to discern quality depend on imaginative thinking, initiatives in the STEM fields must be supported in cultivating this capacity. Programs that integrate the creative arts with STEM subject matter will help produce the kind of learning environments that nurture American ingenuity and create the new ideas that fuel our future.

Valsin Marmillion  
Founder and President  
Marmillion + Company  
Washington, D.C.