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THE STATE OF SCIENCE: OUR POSITION

US schools continue to lag behind internationally in science and math education. The primary concern cited by research is that students do not show an understanding or appreciation for both how science is done and what scientific inquiry has discovered.

High school seniors in the United States were among the lowest scoring students from 41 nations that participated in the Third International Mathematics and Science Study a few years ago. This is not simply a problem of kids not understanding basic science. Science literacy among young people who will be entering the work force in the immediate future is so poor that it threatens the economic prosperity of the country.

It is amazing how many people pick the most unscientific explanations for events that can clearly be explained by good science. A good science education helps students avoid the pitfalls of pseudo-science. It provides a clear scientific outlook for events that one encounters daily.

Science plays a critical role in our lives because what we learn today largely determines what we will become tomorrow. Clearly, the workplace of tomorrow will be far more complex than it is today, demanding workers with technical skills who can compete in the rapidly changing global economy. Instead of learning how to do science, our kids learn about science, trying to memorize the words and the theorems and the concepts instead of understanding the science behind them. The emphasis is on learning answers more than the exploration of questions, memory at the expense of critical thought, bits and pieces of information instead of understandings in context, recitation over argument, reading rather than doing. Significantly, other studies have cited a lack of adequate funding to supply the tools students need to develop a good science education.

The foundation for a good science education begins at the Elementary school level. This is where the Urban Science Initiative Inc. places its focus. We design and produce educational science events that promote a good understanding of science concepts and facts through the use of stimulating “hands-on” science experiences for children and their parents. We design these events using the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills set for Science. We believe that providing opportunities to learn and experience science at an early age will foster the desire for greater knowledge and the foundation for becoming a future scientist within our community.