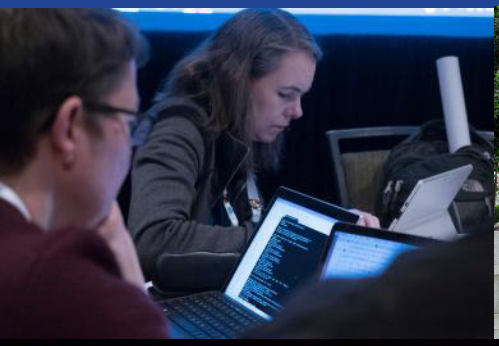
AMERICAN ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

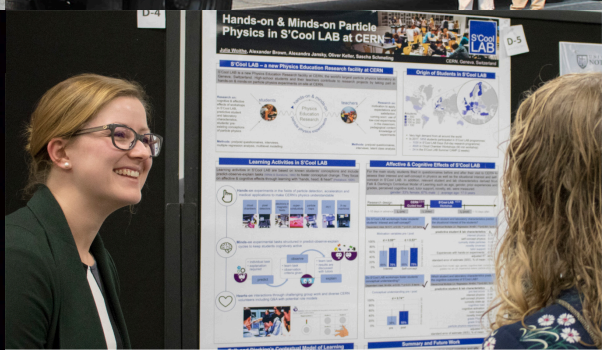
AAPT PHYSICS EDUCATION

2026

Support Funding for **Research, Education,** and the **US STEM Workforce**



The **American Association of Physics Teachers** (AAPT) and the **American Astronomical Society** (AAS) aim to maintain U.S. leadership in the physical sciences and ensure a robust STEM workforce by supporting professional research and physics education at all levels.



AAPT supports education and workforce development programs central to U.S. excellence in STEM.

AAPT is the only national organization supporting physics education from pre-college through graduate school.

- AAPT serves the K-12 physics community. Nearly half of all high school students take physics in high school, and 60% of undergraduate physics majors chose their path because of their high school physics teachers.
- AAPT also serves as the home of physics faculty members in two-year colleges who teach 25% of the introductory physics and 20% of the introductory astronomy courses in the U.S.

AAS supports astronomical research that drives discovery and innovation.

AAS represents over 8,500 scientists, students, and educators, and advocates for the recommendations of the National Academies' Decadal Surveys, which represent the consensus of our community on:

- **Astronomy & Astrophysics:** understanding the origins and evolution of our universe and identifying habitable planets outside our Solar System
- **Planetary Science & Astrobiology:** exploring our Solar System, surveying for near-Earth objects, and looking for signs of life on other bodies
- **Solar & Space Physics:** understanding our Sun and safeguarding our communications systems against space weather events

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT: **AAS.ORG** | EMAIL: public.policy@aas.org | TEL: 202 328 2010
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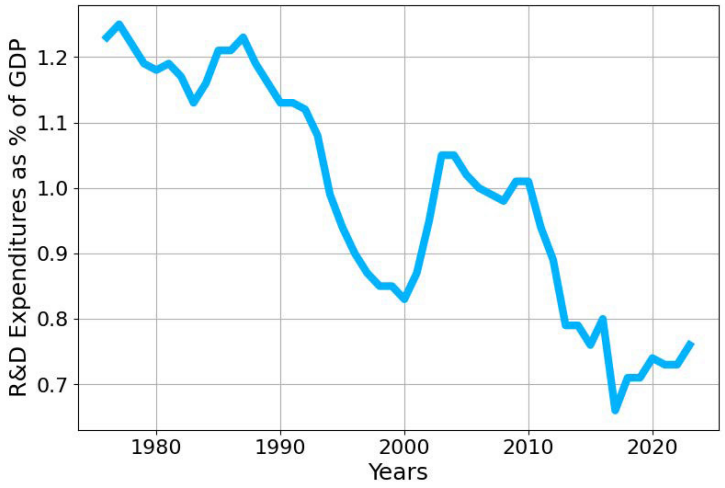
AAPT PHYSICS EDUCATION | AAS AMERICAN ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

Support funding for Research, Education, and the American STEM Workforce

Investment in STEM education and research is an investment in the economy

Curiosity-driven research is vital to innovation and economic growth in the U.S. For example, in FY23, NASA efforts generated more than $75 billion in economic output in all 50 states from a budget of $27.6 billion. However, **the U.S. has seen a 35% decrease in R&D expenditure relative to our GDP over the last three decades and has recently been surpassed by China.**

To ensure that the U.S. remains a global leader in innovation, **we ask that Congress fund sustained, robust growth for science agencies**, including top line increases for the NASA Science Mission Directorate (SMD), NSF, and the DOE Office of Science (SC) to bolster education and research opportunities.



Data retrieved from the AAAS R&D budget and policy tracker at:
https://www.aaas.org/programs/r-d-budget-and-policy/historical-trends-federal-rd

FY 2027 Appropriations Request

Account	FY 2026 (Enacted)	FY 2027 Request
NASA SMD	$7.3	$9.0
NSF	$8.8	$9.9
DOE SC	$8.4	$9.5

all values are given in billions of USD.

This level of funding for FY27 will allow the NASA Science Mission Directorate, NSF, and DOE Office of Science to **support balanced and world-leading physical sciences and workforce development programs.**

- This NSF budget would enable more **support and training for our scientific workforce** through competitive grants, including Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REUs), the Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP), postdoctoral fellowships, and early career programs.
- This NSF budget would **advance K-12 education** research and development to advance STEM learning while leveraging AI and emerging technologies.
- This NSF budget would **support facilities generating terabytes of rich astronomical data every day**, including radio observatories that enable high-accuracy GPS service.
- This NASA SMD budget would enable a **balanced portfolio** of space missions that probe the history of the cosmos and address the question of whether we are alone in the universe.
- The NSF and DOE SC budgets would enable world-leading facilities like the **Vera C. Rubin Observatory** to study dark energy and dark matter, and help DOE continue to engage over 250,000 K-12 students every year through its vast network of DOE labs across the US.

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