

Advertisement pushes education for U.S. students

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WASHINGTON (AP) -- The ad shows a globe suspended above a sheet of mathematical formulas and asks, "Where in the world will the next big idea come from?"

The page is signed by more than 140 executives, educators and politicians who want to strengthen the United States' competitive edge amid intensifying foreign challenges. To bolster competitiveness, they call for increased investments in basic research, improved math and science education, incentives for research and development, and policies to attract and retain the world's brightest minds.

"Make no mistake: The search for scientific breakthroughs and new technologies will go forward whether we lead or follow," says the ad, which is being run Wednesday in The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post and other publications.

The ad follows on the heels of President Bush's "American Competitiveness Initiative," which he unveiled in his State of the Union address last week and promoted in his 2007 budget on Monday. The president's initiative, responding to Americans' anxiety over competition from China, India and other countries, would extend an expired business tax break for research and development, double the government's commitment to basic scientific research and train thousands of new science and math teachers. The ad is signed by leaders from industry, academia and government, including governors from Texas, Virginia and New York. The ad also dovetails with efforts by the Council on Competitiveness, a group that seeks to improve the country's competitive position.

"We wanted to keep the momentum going," Craig Barrett, chairman of Intel Corp., one of the ad's signers, said in an interview with The Associated Press on Tuesday. The ad, he said, is targeted toward reaching the administration and Congress. "The United States faces an unprecedented challenge to its long-term global competitiveness," another signer, William Brody, president of The Johns Hopkins University, said in a statement. "We must innovate to compete."

Barrett and Brody co-chair a national innovation effort at the Council on Competitiveness.

"The legacy for our children ... comes down to innovation and investing in our research and in our people," the council's president, Deborah Wince-Smith, who also signed the ad, said in an interview.

People involved in the ad campaign also will continue to work the administration and Congress to bring about legislative changes to make the country more competitive.