A recent study of "diversity in the high-tech workplace" for the 10 highest-grossing high-tech companies in Silicon Valley, showed that one in three jobs between 1996 and 2000 were filled by Asian employees. This is attributed to the fact that Asian countries (especially China and India) turn out three times as many science and engineering graduates as the United States annually, according to the National Science Foundation; and Asians comprise nearly 8 percent of science and engineering graduates from the U.S. The U.S. education system is losing the battle to educate native-born engineers and scientists. At the same time an increasing number of technology and engineering jobs are being exported overseas due to a combination of cheaper labor rates and insufficient home-grown talent – many billions of dollars worth of lost U.S. wages.

For those New York State students who currently take the mandated Middle School Technology education classes and do not later pursue careers in engineering, science or technology, society still benefits. A populace that is well-grounded in technology is needed to make intelligent decisions which affect the quality of life in our State and our communities. Such issues as landfill siting, the re-use of brownfield sites for economic development, nuclear power, nuclear and hazardous waste disposal, the risks of soil vaporization from groundwater pollution, the need for infrastructure improvements, and homeland security in the wake of September 11 (to mention just a few technology issues), require technology-literate citizens who can balance risks against cost and benefits.

The New York State Society of Professional Engineers is in sympathy with the NYS Education Department's goals "to strengthen middle grades education and to improve student performance on the State's intermediate assessments." However, we urge that New York State secondary education <u>not</u> be allowed to take a major step backward from its national leadership position of mandatory Technology Education for NYS Middle School students. We also urge that mandatory Grade 8 assessment for Technology courses be re-established so that the courses will be taught with the same diligence and dedication as other core courses.

Very truly yours,

John J. Martin, PE

Immediate Past President

Enclosure

Cc: Mr. Joseph Leogrande, President, NYS Technology Education Association

Mr. Charles Goodwin, Co-Chairperson, NYSTEA Advisory Council

Mr. Kendall Starkweather, Executive Director, International Technology Education