



# Alexandria Polk

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**International Studies & Political Science  
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- **Research:** *Women's Empowerment Through Education: Advancing in STEM*

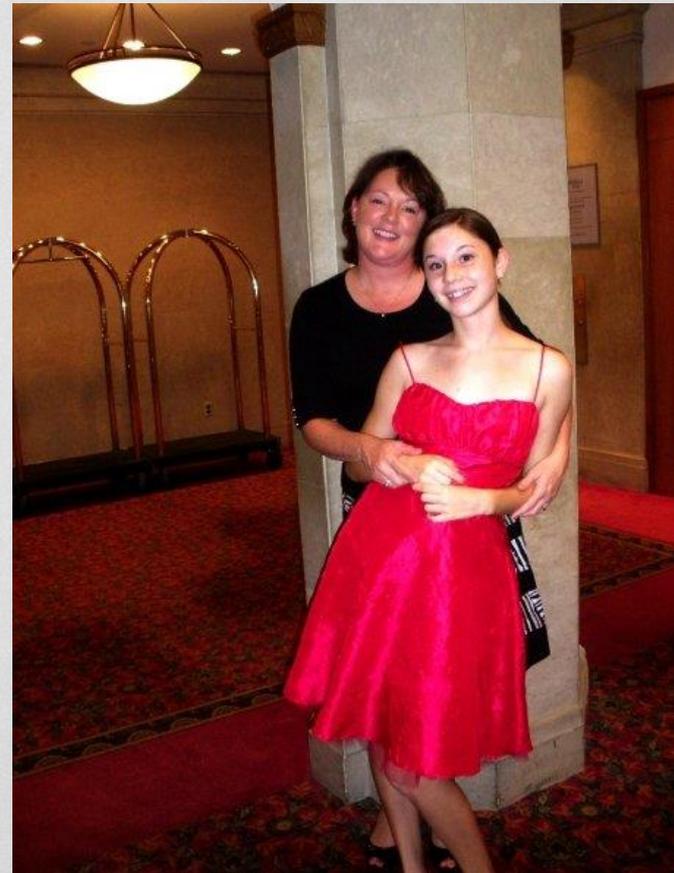
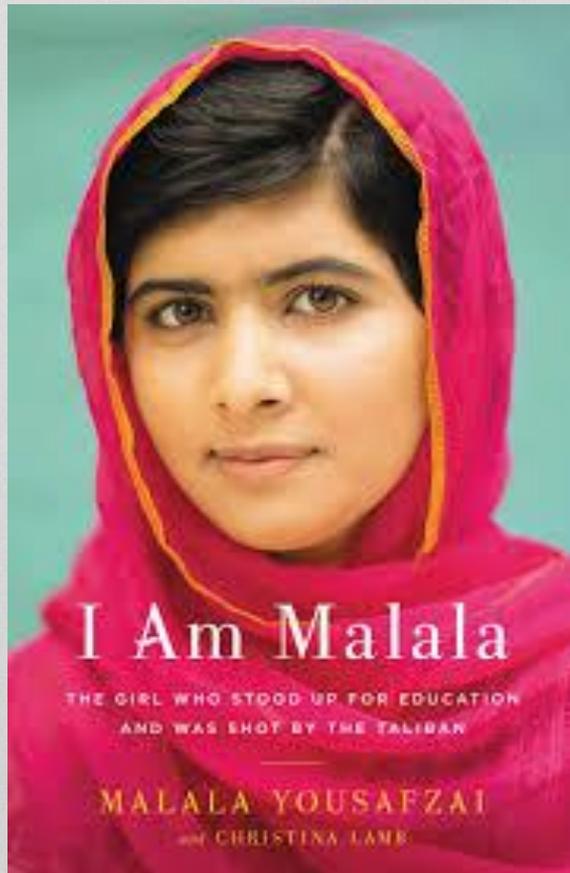
**NC Model:** *The PURPOSE  
Institute*



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# Why Am I Here?

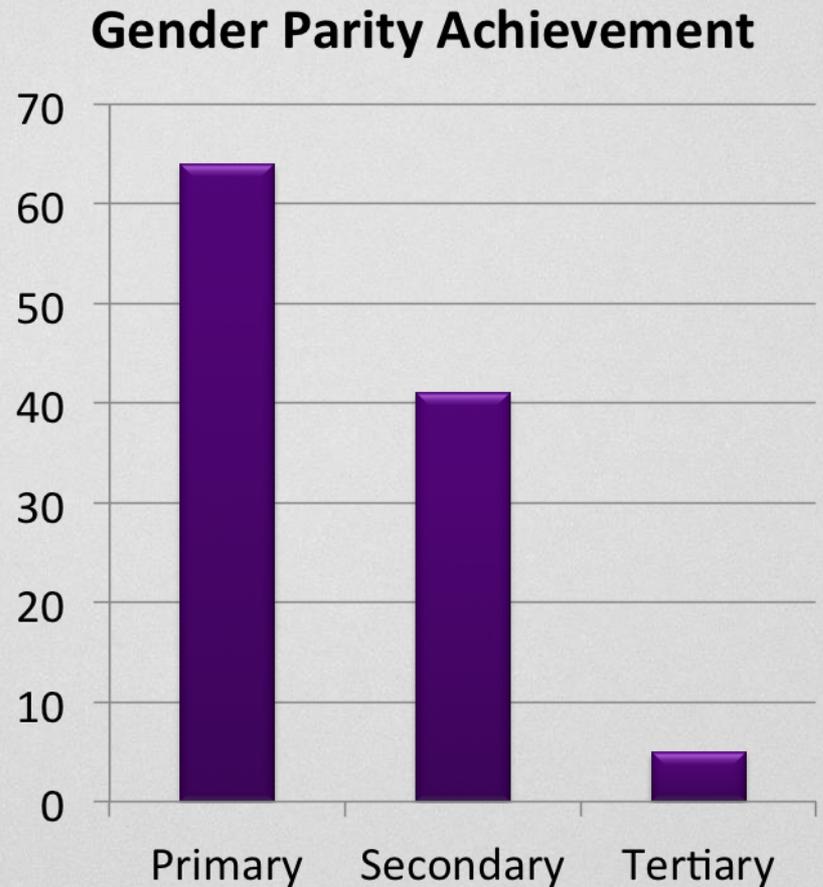


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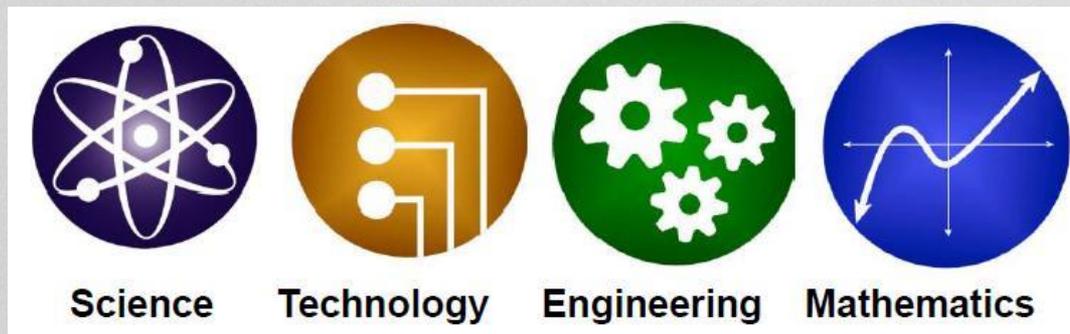
# Where We Are Globally

- Progress at the **primary level**.
- Concern for **secondary** and **tertiary** education.
- “Only **2 out of 130** countries have achieved gender parity target at all levels of education.” (MDG Report, 2013)



# Women In STEM

- **Access vs. Representation**
- **Women only makeup 25%** of the STEM workforce.
- “The reason there aren’t more women computer scientists is because there aren’t more women computer scientists” – Jocelyn Goldfein, Facebook Director of Engineering



# Women In STEM



- Boys and girls show similar interests/aptitudes in STEM subjects at a young age.
- Sharp declines in confidence.
- Disinterest increases.
- “Ambient Belonging”

Sapna Cheryan

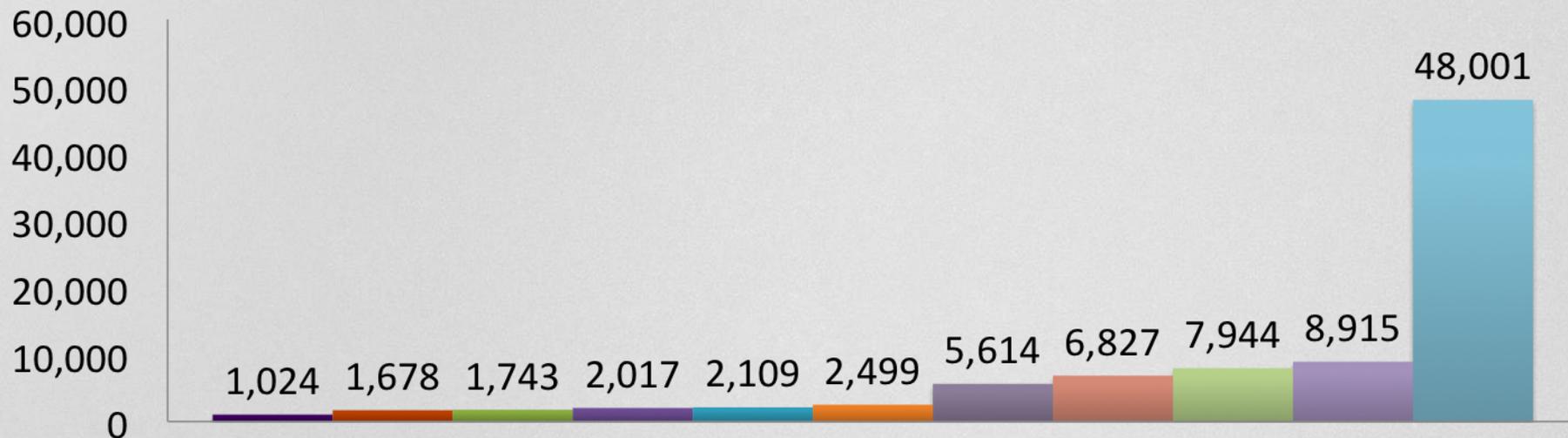
“Math class is tough!”



Teen Talk Barbie,  
1992



# STEM Representation: Undergraduate Level



Women in STEM

- Physics
- Earth Sciences
- Chemical Engineering
- Mechanical Engineering
- Electrical Engineering
- Civil Engineering
- Chemistry
- Mathematics
- Computer Sciences
- Agricultural Sciences
- Biological Sciences

AAUW "Why So Few?"

# The PURPOSE Institute (NCSU)

- “Promoting Under Represented Presence On Science and Engineering” Faculty
  - **Mission:** “To significantly increase the number and success of Underrepresented Minority (URM)”
- **2007 “Advance-ENG Girls to Women” Summit**
  - 125 women applied for the initial 50 attendance openings
  - 70 women and their mothers were accepted
- **Role-Model-and-Support Practice**



# Quotes

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- “**Give yourself permission** to give your daughter permission [to be successful].”
- “Do something **BIG**.”
- “We need to **encourage the desire to learn** and the importance of people with that desire.”



# Model Women in STEM



- Fabiola Gianotti
- Shirley Ann Jackson
- Hedy Lamarr
- Lilia Abron

“It is important, being with women who are **successful, but hidden** [in STEM].”

# Other Notable Programs

- The Girl Effect
- IEEE Women in Engineering
- US Department of Energy
- Girl Scouts and NASA
- White House Initiatives
- Project Scientist



# Will YOU be a mentor for a young woman?

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Thank You



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# Women's Empowerment Through Education

## Advancing in STEM

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Alex Polk

WomenNC CSW 2014 Fellow

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