

June 15, 2007

The Honorable George Miller
Chairman
Education and Labor Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Dale Kildee
Chairman
Early Childhood, Elementary and
Secondary Education Subcommittee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Howard McKeon
Ranking Member
Education and Labor Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Castle
Ranking Member
Early Childhood, Elementary and
Secondary Education Subcommittee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Miller, Representative McKeon, Chairman Kildee and Representative Castle:

RE: Support H.R. 2449, the Achievement through Technology and Innovation (ATTAIN) Act

On behalf of the Mission Critical Campaign – a coalition of educators, state and local education leaders and public officials, and the high-tech industry – we write to inform you of our support for the *Achievement through Technology and Innovation (ATTAIN) Act* (HR 2449), recently introduced by Representatives Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA), Ruben Hinojosa (D-TX), Judy Biggert (R-IL) and Ron Kind (D-WI). We ask that you include this bipartisan legislation in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. ATTAIN is intended to replace the Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) program, Title II-D of the No Child Left Behind Act.

The ATTAIN Act is based on the view that our federal policies must help propel our schools into the 21st Century by supporting learning environments that meet the needs of digital age students and a digital world. Many of today's educational goals and requirements can be most effectively achieved by modernizing our educational practices through technology. Education technology is essential for systemically improving schools, as it plays a key role in improving student achievement, developing highly qualified teachers, providing access to rigorous coursework, preparing students for the real challenges of today's world, identifying student learning needs, and implementing differentiated learning strategies.

The ATTAIN Act would revamp EETT, improving support for disadvantaged schools and students and ensuring that teachers are properly equipped to use the technology effectively. It was developed to leverage the strengths of the existing EETT program, while addressing several practical program challenges. More specifically, it would focus funds on professional development and systemic reform that leverage 21st century technologies, prioritize funding to schools in need of improvement, and require states to assess whether students have attained technological literacy by the eighth grade.

The ATTAIN Act would update the existing EETT program by:

- Increasing the share of state-to-local funding distributed by formula from 50% to 60% and adding a minimum grant size in order to assure that more school districts receive allocations of a size sufficient to operate significant education technology programs.
- Strengthening the program's emphasis on teacher quality and technology skills by raising the portion of formula-grants set aside for professional development from 25% to 40%, while emphasizing the importance of timely and ongoing training.
- Channeling the 40% of funds allocated for competitive grants, previously unrestricted, to schools and districts for systemic school reform built around the use of technology to redesign curriculum, instruction, assessment and data use.
- More closely aligning the program with NCLB's core mission by giving priority in competitive grant awards to schools identified as in need of improvement, including those with a large percentage of limited English proficient students and students with disabilities, as well as by focusing formula grants on students and subjects where proficiency is most lacking.
- Renewing NCLB's commitment to ensuring that students are technologically literate by the eighth grade through requiring states to assess student knowledge and skills, including through embedding assessment items in other state tests and performance-based assessments portfolios.
- Drawing state, district and school attention to the age and functionality needs of school technology infrastructure, access and applications by requiring states to provide technical assistance and guidance to districts on updating these resources.

The ATTAIN Act will help ensure our educational system adopts modern methods critical to meeting the needs and goals of NCLB – raising student achievement and preparing all students to compete in the 21st Century.

Again, we strongly support H.R. 2449 and encourage you to include it as part of the reauthorization of the ESEA. Please contact our coalition co-chairs Hilary Goldmann (202-861-7777; hgoldmann@iste.org) or Mark Schneiderman (202-789-4444; marks@siia.net) for additional information.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Excellent Education
American Assoc. of Colleges for Teacher Education
American Federation of Teachers
American Library Association
Association of Educational Service Agencies
Association of Public Television Stations
Blackboard
California Department of Education
Consortium for School Networking
Dell
Discovery Communications, LLC
EDUCAUSE

Federation of American Scientists
Intel
International Society for Technology in Education
National Association of State Boards of Education
National Education Association
National School Boards Association
Knowledge Alliance
North American Council for Online Learning
PBS
Software & Information Industry Association
State Educational Technology Directors Assoc.