

May 18, 2007

The Honorable Tom Harkin, Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor-HHS-Education
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Arlen Specter, Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor-HHS-Education
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Senator Specter:

RE: FY2008 Education Appropriations for School Technology

On behalf of the Mission Critical Campaign – a coalition of educators, state and local education leaders and public officials, and the high-tech industry – our organizations urge you to fund the Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) program (NCLB Title II, Part D) at \$700 million in the FY08 Labor, HHS and Education Appropriations bill to restore funding to its FY 02-04 levels. This increased funding is necessary to ensure formula grants are returned to a size that would maximize their local impact -- a goal that has been challenged in light of the nearly 40% funding cut to \$272 million over the last three years.

Educational technologies and the EETT program are mission critical to our educational success and national competitiveness. Congress included EETT as a core provision in NCLB in recognition of technology's importance in addressing the law's central goals and requirements and improving student achievement. Additionally, education technology plays an integral role in addressing the science, technology, engineering, math (STEM), foreign language and other educational gaps that lie at the heart of the Administration's and Congress' efforts to upgrade America's competitiveness.

According to the 2007 EETT National Trends Report, "findings strongly indicate that technology funding from the NCLB II D program directly supports NCLB goals in four distinct ways:

- Closing the achievement gap by providing access to software, online resources, and virtual learning aligned to academic standards for instruction and learning.
- Closing the digital divide by providing increased levels of access and robust connectivity for students in low socioeconomic status (SES) schools.
- Supporting the development of highly qualified teachers by providing online courses, communities of practice, and virtual communication that ensure flexibility and access.
- Enhancing data systems to ensure that educators can utilize real-time data to inform sound instructional decisions and ensure that states meet AYP."

(<http://setda.liveelements.net/web/guest/2007NationalTrendsReport>)

EETT funds provide schools with an important baseline of support for ensuring a competitive 21st Century learning environment. For many states and districts, these funds are also a catalyst used to leverage further investments and reforms otherwise not possible.

We urge you to support restoration of funding for the Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) program to \$700 million. 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,

American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education
American Association of School Administrators
Apple
Association of Educational Service Agencies
Blackboard
California Department of Education
Consortium for School Networking
Cox Communications
Discovery Communications, LLC
Dell
EDUCAUSE
Federation of American Scientists
Information Technology Association of America
Intel
International Society for Technology in Education
Knowledge Alliance (formerly NEKIA)
Microsoft
National Association of Independent Schools
National Association of State Boards of Education
National Catholic Educational Association
National Education Association
National Rural Education Advocacy Coalition
National School Boards Association
New York State Education Department
North American Council for Online Learning
PBS
SAS
Software & Information Industry Association
State Educational Technology Directors Association
The U.S. Conference of Mayors
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

cc: Members of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor-HHS-Education