

May 12, 2006

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

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

Dear Chairman Specter and Senator Harkin:

RE: FY2007 Education Appropriations for School Technology

On behalf of the Mission Critical Campaign – a coalition of educators, state and local education leaders and public officials, the high-tech industry and other education stakeholder organizations listed below – we urge you to fund the Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) program (NCLB Title II, Part D) at \$496 million in the FY07 Labor, HHS and Education Appropriations bill. The Administration's FY07 proposed budget would eliminate all funding for EETT. We believe that educational technologies and the EETT program are mission critical to our educational success and national competitiveness, and hope that you will work with us to support the restoration of this vital funding.

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.

EETT is critical to effective implementation and achievement of these goals and requirements, including by supporting:

- Online educator training and peer communities aimed at ensuring highly qualified teachers in every classroom and their ability to effectively use technology in instruction;
- Access to digital materials and distance learning that helps students engage in studies, close the achievement gap and access often otherwise unavailable courses, especially in low-income and rural communities often lacking teachers qualified in science, math and critical foreign languages; and
- Assessment and data systems that track AYP, inform instruction and enable accountability.

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. According to the EETT National Trends Report (<http://www.setda.org/content.cfm?SectionID=185>), schools are utilizing EETT funds especially to improve student learning in math and reading and to address teacher quality through professional development. Data is beginning to show that EETT funds directly impact student achievement and a school's ability to meet AYP.

We urge you to support restoration of funding for the Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) program to the \$496 million FY05 level. 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,

Apple
Association of Educational Service Agencies
Consortium for School Networking
Council of Chief State School Officers
Cox Communications
Dell
Discovery Communications
EDUCAUSE
Federation of American Scientists
Florida Virtual School
Hewlett-Packard
Information Technology Association of America
Intel
International Society for Technology in Education
Juniper Networks

Microsoft
National Association of State Boards of Education
National Education Association
National School Boards Association
National Science Teachers Association
North American Council for Online Learning
PBS
SchoolNet, Inc.
School Superintendents of Alabama
Software & Information Industry Association
State Educational Technology Directors Association
TechNet
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
United States Conference of Mayors

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