



October 31, 2007

The Honorable Edward Kennedy
Chairman
Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Enzi
Ranking Member
Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Christopher Dodd
Chairman
Childhood & Families Subcommittee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Ranking Member
Children & Families Subcommittee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Comments on NCLB Title II, Part D Discussion Draft

Dear Senators Kennedy, Enzi, Dodd and Alexander:

On behalf of the Consortium for School Networking (CoSN), the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), the Software & Information Industry Association (SIIA), and the State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA), we write in support of Title II, Part D of the Kennedy-Enzi ESEA reauthorization draft. We are extremely supportive of your inclusion of the Achievement through Technology and Innovation (ATTAIN) Act, and provide below comments regarding Section 2412 aimed at its further improvement.

Our organizations represent tens of thousands of K-12 educators who use or oversee technology as well as business partners who provide needed teaching and learning technologies. We view technology as critical for our schools to both meet the goals of the Act to raise student achievement and ensure high quality teaching, and to ensure that our nation's students are prepared to compete in the 21st Century. Yet, many schools lack the capacity and training necessary for the 21st century classroom and for meeting the needs and expectations of today's digital native students.

We are especially gratified with the proposed revamping and strengthening of the current Title II-D program through the ATTAIN Act, introduced by Senators Bingaman, Burr and Murray as S.1996. This includes the following key elements: (1) the targeting of funds to professional development and systemic school design centered on the use of technology; (2) the targeting of competitive grant funding for districts with schools that are not making adequate yearly progress; and (3) the renewed commitment to the goal of all students being technology literate by the end of eighth grade.

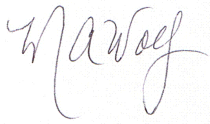
We do note that the bill includes authorization for a National Center for Achievement through Technology (Section 2412), but that these provisions are in brackets. We encourage you to include this National Center in the final bill as a core element of federal leadership. The Center would be a "... national resource for the improvement of technology implementation in education through identification and dissemination of promising practices and exemplary programs that effectively use educational technologies to improve teaching and learning ..." This is consistent with the ATTAIN program, and the current NCLB Act overall, which emphasize the importance of research to help improve education

decision making, practice, and outcomes. Targeted federal resources are required to meet this need, which is not currently addressed by other existing federal initiatives.

The current federal research network – including the Comprehensive Centers authorized by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 – does not address technology in education, as identified by a review of the Comprehensive Center resources, a survey of Comprehensive Center directors and staff, and a survey of our member state and local educators and education leaders. In practice, the fifteen regional Comprehensive Centers largely serve as dissemination mechanisms for resources produced by the five topical Comprehensive Centers, and none of the topical Centers include technology in their missions or agendas. Moreover, the Comprehensive Centers are targeted not to local needs, but to meeting state needs with an emphasis on technical assistance and training. In short, the National Center's goals of synthesizing and disseminating research on the effective use of technology for local districts and schools are neither currently addressed by other federal programs nor are sufficiently authorized in other laws. We therefore encourage you to authorize the National Center for Achievement through Technology as part of Title II-D, which would support state and local education agencies in identifying effective uses of technology and the conditions and practices important to ensuring that effectiveness.

Thank you for including Title II-D, the ATTAIN Act in your draft ESEA reauthorization proposal. We ask that you also include Section 2412 in the final bill. We thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments, and we look forward to continuing to work closely with you and your staff on this important legislation and on providing federal support for technology in teaching and learning.

Sincerely,



Mary Ann Wolf
Executive Director
SETDA



Keith Krueger
CEO
CoSN



Don Knezek
CEO
ISTE



Ken Wasch
Executive Director
SIIA

cc. Senator Jeff Bingaman
Senator Richard Burr
Senator Patty Murray