

Software & Information Industry Association

June 17, 2005

Member
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the Software & Information Industry Association (SIIA) and our member high-tech companies, I write to urge FY2006 appropriations for the Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) program at a level that is not less than the \$690 million allocated in FY02-FY04.

Technology and EETT funds are mission critical educational tools necessary to both meet the goals of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and ensure students are prepared to compete in the 21st Century.

SIIA's 750+ member IT companies provide software and electronic content for consumers, business, education and the Internet. Many SIIA members partner with educators to provide education software tools and digital curriculum that improves teaching and learning. We all depend on our nation's schools for a skilled and productive high-tech workforce.

America's companies are struggling to find applicants with the science, technology, engineering and math skills needed to compete in the technology-driven global marketplace. Study after study has shown that e-learning is critical to addressing this need by providing today's students with a learning environment and opportunities that both reflect and prepare them for the world beyond the classroom.

From virtual fieldtrips that excite students about science to software simulations that clarify complex mathematical concepts to computer-based assessment that helps diagnose, remediate and track student progress, educational technologies must be at the forefront of our efforts to improve student achievement and compete globally.

With technology's recent integration into the classroom, we have started to realize this potential. However, schools and school budgets are slow to adjust. Our nation's K-12 schools spend only about one-twentieth per student on technology as does the private sector spend per employee, while in 37 states, EETT is the sole or primary source of technology grants available to schools. Targeted federal investment is therefore critical to ensure all communities have a sustained and stable source of funding to meet technology needs and goals.

I therefore urge you to fund EETT at \$690 million to ensure schools across the country can adhere to the standards and requirements set forth in NCLB and ensure students are prepared to enter the 21st century workforce.

If we can be of further assistance, please contact me or Mark Schneiderman, SIIA's Director of Education Policy, at 202-789-4444 or marks@siia.net.

Sincerely,



Kenneth A. Wasch
President