

# Software & Information Industry Association

April 5, 2005

Member

Labor, HHS & Education Appropriations Subcommittee  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515



Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Software & Information Industry Association (SIIA), the principal trade association of the software code and digital content industry, I write to urge FY2006 appropriations of the Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) program at the FY04 level of \$690 million. 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 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

SIIA's 600+ member high-tech companies develop and market 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, while all depend on the nation's schools for a skilled and productive high-tech workforce. SIIA and our member companies believe technology is critical to meeting the nation's education and workforce goals, and that federal leadership and resources are essential to these efforts. We greatly appreciate Congressional support for Math and Science Education Partnerships, but believe those funds will only be most successful when leveraged with continued EETT investment at the levels provided in FY2004.

Educational software and e-learning are mission critical to providing today's students with a learning environment and opportunities that both reflect and prepare them for the world beyond the classroom. In working with educators, SIIA members see how important instructional and management technologies are to their efforts at assessment, accountability, instruction, data-driven decision making, teacher quality and parental involvement. It is clear that school needs around the NCLB can not be efficiently or effectively met without technology's productivity, including for the following:

- Assessment: computer-assisted and online testing that provides for more immediate results on both formative (to inform instruction) and summative (for accountability) assessment,
- Instruction: courseware that helps diagnose and address student learning needs through embedded assessment and personalized and engaging instructional content;
- Accountability: information management applications that efficiently disaggregate and report student test scores, help track adequate yearly progress, and inform instruction and professional development; and

- Supplemental Services & Teacher Quality: online distance learning for supplemental tutoring and teacher training provides learning opportunities not otherwise available, especially in rural areas.

SIIA member high-tech companies also recognize this investment as necessary to meeting their workforce needs. Education technology and Internet-based tools are critical to ensuring all students achieve to high standards and gain the 21<sup>st</sup> Century knowledge and higher-order thinking skills necessary to succeed in today's highly competitive and information technology rich economy. Skills include technology literacy, problem solving, communication, information synthesis and the ability to be a self-directed learner in an age when most will need to retrain continuously in the evolving workplace. In fact, NCLB requires students to be technology literate by the 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

With technology's recent integration into the classroom, we have started to realize its potential to transform teaching and learning and improve student achievement. However, schools and school budgets are slow to adjust, and therefore targeted federal investment is critical to ensure all communities have a sustained and stable source of funding to meet technology needs and goals. In fact, our nation's K-12 schools spend only about one-twentieth per student on technology as does the private sector spend per employee.

SIIA urges the federal government to not cede its leadership role in the area of technology. The No Child Left Behind Act is an important step toward improving the nation's elementary and secondary schools, but these goals and requirements can only be achieved if this federal leadership is matched by federal investment. Eliminating the EETT program would seriously undermine the ability of schools across the country to adhere to the strict standards and requirements set forth in NCLB, and would make students less prepared to enter the 21st century workforce. Therefore, I urge Congress to restore funding to the EETT program at \$690 million in FY2006.

The Software & Information Industry Association and its member high-tech companies look forward to working with you to achieve increased federal investment in education technology to help address the nation's educational needs. If we can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me or Mark Schneiderman, SIIA's Director of Education Policy, at 202-789-4444 or [marks@siia.net](mailto:marks@siia.net).

Sincerely,



Kenneth A. Wasch  
President