

September 9, 2004

United States Senate  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

**As you consider the Senate FY05 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill, the undersigned companies and associations strongly urge you to fully fund the “Enhancing Education Through Technology” (EETT) program and oppose any efforts in Conference to reduce its funding level.**

We believe technology is critical to meeting the nation’s education goals, and that federal leadership and resources are essential to these efforts. This includes technology for student testing to diagnose and prescribe instruction, managing accountability data, providing Title I supplemental services and ensuring students are technology literate, for example. With today's students born in the digital age and masters of technology, classroom technologies are necessary to engage them in learning and are central to education improvement.

The EETT program is vital as the only program within NCLB that is solely dedicated to classroom-based technology access. EETT, Title II-Part D of NCLB, was authorized at \$1 billion and has received appropriations of approximately \$700 million consistently for the past three years.

It is essential to fully fund this program to support efforts to:

- Elevate student achievement**
- Ensure technology access for “at risk” students**
- Promote growth in the education marketplace**

***Impact on Student Achievement, etc.***

EETT funds are used by states and school districts to increase access to standards-based curricular materials and improve professional development in accordance with NCLB – particularly for low-income districts facing the highest educational risks.

Districts rely on EETT funds as a core means for providing a competitive, 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning environment that provides students, educators and communities with:

- Access to instruction and courses through web-based distance learning not otherwise available, especially in rural and high-poverty schools.
- One-on-one remediation made possible through engaging, interactive instructional software that adapts to support the learning needs and pace of each individual student.

- Real-time, on-demand assessment tools that accurately gauge students' learning strengths and weaknesses and help teachers target their instruction.
- Expanded opportunities to build teacher skills and professional community through web-based training and collaboration so that all teachers can meet NCLB's definition of highly qualified.

One of the key requirements of NCLB is that all students be technologically literate by the end of the eighth grade. Congress included this requirement because it understood the stakes of maintaining global competitiveness and economic vitality. EETT funds sit at the heart of meeting Congress' intent. They assure our students know how to apply the tools of modern society to elevate achievement and their own personal growth.

**Increased EETT funds are important as NCLB's implementation is advancing nationwide, and would send precisely the right message to our schools and communities.** These goals and requirements can only be achieved if federal leadership is matched by federal investment. Given the tough economic conditions districts now face, we know EETT funding is critical to reduce pressures on local budgets and would not soon be replaced. According to the State Educational Technology Directors Association, EETT is the only technology funding available to a quarter of all states and districts.

#### *Negative Impact on "At-Risk" Student Populations*

Without question, EETT funds are most critical to low-income, minority, and rural students as well as students with disabilities. Studies continue to show that our nation's most historically disadvantaged groups remain well below average in their technology access. In fact, a 2002 National Telecommunications & Information Administration study found that many of the most disadvantaged students rely solely on their schools and libraries for access to the Internet. Failure to increase **EETT funds would disproportionately impact those individuals with the fewest options by reducing opportunities for classroom-based technology access.**

#### *Negative Impact on the Education Marketplace*

EETT is critical to the struggling school market for standards-based digital curricula and instructional delivery tools. EETT funds serve to provide incentives to the marketplace for evidenced-based, digital instructional content and classroom technology tools. They act as an essential catalyst for millions of dollars of private sector R&D into products and services aimed at modernizing our school practices. When schools are provided a stable and continuous stream of funding to access technology-based instructional tools, the marketplace is stimulated to respond. But when states and local districts face cutbacks, as is presently the case, the private sector looks to increases in federal ed tech funding as the impetus to continue investing.

**If EETT funds fail to keep pace with needs, the impact will be a chilling of the education marketplace because districts will be forced to stretch their instructional technology spending over multiple school years.** This could drive countless numbers of digital content providers out of the K-12 market precisely at a time when the nation is calling on them to build the needed technology-driven content that will significantly elevate performance and

achievement. We cannot underscore the importance of these funds to leveraging critical investment in effective, classroom-based instructional technologies.

For these reasons, the undersigned companies and organizations strongly urge you to increase funding for EETT, and support the program's full funding. We look forward to working with you to enhance federal leadership and support for education and education technology.

If we can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact any of the entities below, or contact either Irene Spero of CoSN (202-861-2676 or [irene@cosn.org](mailto:irene@cosn.org)) or Mark Schneiderman at SIIA (202-789-4444 or [marks@siaa.net](mailto:marks@siaa.net)).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Consortium for School Networking (CoSN)  
International Society for Technology in  
Education (ISTE)  
Software & Information Industry Association  
(SIIA)  
ADC Telecommunication and ADC  
Foundation  
AlphaSmart, Inc.  
America Online - AOL@School  
Apple  
Atomic Learning  
Bell South  
Campus K12  
Carnegie Learning  
C. Blohm & Associates  
Cox Communications, Inc.  
Dell  
Discovery Communication, Inc.  
Edusoft  
Encyclopedia Britannica  
ETS  
Gateway

Harcourt Education  
HOSTS Learning  
Houghton Mifflin Company  
HP  
Inspiration Software  
Intel Corporation  
Intellitools  
Kaplan K12 Learning Services  
KCH Strategies  
Larson Learning, Inc.  
Learning.com  
Learn Star  
Merit Software  
Pearson Education  
PLATO Learning  
Red Hat  
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