

September 3, 2003

Dear Senator:

RE: Labor-HHS-Ed Appropriations - Funding for Teacher Technology Training (PT3) Program

The undersigned high-tech and education entities urge you to provide continued funding for the Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to Use Technology (PT3) program in the Senate FY2004 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill (S.1536). We view continued funding of the PT3 program as a critical element of the federal leadership necessary to ensure effective use of technology in our classrooms and thus to ensure all students achieve to high standards and gain 21st Century skills. We further urge that such funding not be provided through reductions to technology, teacher training or other education programs. With the U.S. Department of Education about to award \$30 million in new PT3 grants, funding in FY04 and future years is critical to the efficacy of these multi-year grants.

PT3 is a one of a kind program that leverages partnerships between local communities, schools of education and the private sector to infuse technology into teacher preparation and professional development and ensure teachers can integrate technology into their instruction. With more than 2 million new teachers expected to join the teaching force in the next few years and 87% of classrooms connected to the Internet, it becomes increasingly more important that teachers know how to use technology when they step into the classroom. Technology provides a critical tool necessary for improving education and meeting NCLBA goals and requirements, but unfortunately, only 42% of novice teachers nationwide felt well or very well prepared to use computers for instruction in their first year (Education Week's Technology Counts, May 2003). The PT3 program meets this unique need that would be unaddressed without targeted federal investment.

Technology and the Internet provide educators with exciting new tools that can positively transform their methods and role, invigorate their experience and better enable them to meet "No Child Left Behind Act" goals and requirements. With this paradigm shift in teaching and learning at a relatively early stage, educators need training to most effectively use this technology. Federal leadership through PT3 is critical to this effort to modernize the curricula of our schools of education that prepare and provide professional development for most teachers. Absent this change, we will be caught in a vicious circle in which too many students are entering teacher colleges enthused about technology but leave without the teaching skills to translate that into the classroom. As a result, we will continue to lose the opportunity for the next generation of new teachers to enter the classroom with the skills to modernize teaching and learning. PT3 goals cannot be adequately addressed with other federal program funds and are not being adequately addressed absent such federal intervention. Targeted resources are necessary.

Federal support for the Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to Use Technology program has been very effective in targeting limited federal dollars to a leverage point with maximum impact on the future of the nation's teaching force and student achievement. We look forward to working with you to ensure Senate FY2004 funding for this critical program to support the nation's efforts to improve teacher quality, technology integration and student achievement. If we can be of

further assistance, please contact any of the organizations below or Mark Schneiderman, SIIA's Director of Education Policy, at (202) 789-4444 or marks@siia.net.

Respectfully Submitted,

American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

Apple

Consortium for School Networking

Harcourt

Intel

International Society for Technology in Education

Kaplan K12 Learning Services

National Education Association

National Education Knowledge Industry Association

PLATO Learning

Software & Information Industry Association

The McGraw-Hill Companies

University Continuing Education Association