

August 15, 2001

Dear Conferee:

RE: H.R.1 Conference Report - Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to Use Technology

The undersigned companies and industry groups urge you to include the Senate-passed "Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to Use Technology" (PT3) program in the Conference Report to H.R.1 to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). We commend the House and Senate for bipartisan passage of bills that provide the support and accountability necessary for all students to achieve to high standards. We view teacher training through continuation of PT3 as a critical element of the federal leadership necessary to ensure effective use of technology in our classrooms and thus to prepare all students with 21st Century skills.

While we support a consolidation of federal education programs, the PT3 program meets a unique need that would remain unaddressed without targeted federal investment. An April, 2000 U.S. Department of Education study found that only 33% of public school teachers felt well prepared or very well prepared to use computers and the Internet. The PT3 program leverages partnerships between local communities, schools of education and the private sector to infuse technology into teacher preparation and professional development. The grants foster collaboration among these key partners, thereby promoting best practices, enhancing institutional capacity, reforming teacher training, and ultimately improving the ability of teachers to integrate technology into their curriculum and instruction.

Technology and the Internet provide educators with exciting new tools that can positively transform their methods and role and invigorate their experience. Technology can help teachers be more efficient and effective by enabling them to:

- create a more engaging learning environment that replaces, in part, many rote and group activities with personalized instruction in which the teacher serves as mentor and guide to a student's self-paced and self-directed learning;
- improve instructional management, including the tracking and diagnosis of students' unique learning styles and needs and the analysis of data and information to inform their instruction and curricula;
- communicate with parents to better involve them in their children's education; and
- develop their professional abilities through online collaboration with peers, access to research and information, and distance professional development.

This paradigm shift in teaching and the introduction of technology into the classroom stands at a relatively early stage, and educators therefore need training to learn how to best integrate technology into their instruction. With 2.2 million new teachers needed in the next few years, we can not afford this skills gap in the next generation of teachers. Only through federal leadership can we modernize the curricula of our schools of education that prepare and provide professional development for most teachers. The 1999 "Will New Teachers Be Prepared To Teach In A Digital Age?" study, funded by the Milken Family Foundation and conducted by the

International Society for Technology in Education, found that teacher preparation programs, "while well-intentioned, are not providing the kind of training and exposure teachers need if they are to be proficient and comfortable integrating technology with their teaching."

We look forward to working with you to ensure final passage of a bipartisan bill that supports the nation's efforts to improve teacher quality and student achievement. Federal resources under the existing PT3 program have 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 we urge you to authorize and fund this program to ensure this important need is addressed and the national investment in education technology improves teaching 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) 452-1600 x329 or marks@siia.net.

Respectfully Submitted,

AOL Time Warner
Apple
Classroom Connect
Compaq Computer Corporation
Computer and Communications Industry Association
Hewlett-Packard Company
Intel
Lightspan
Riverdeep Interactive Learning
SchoolTone Alliance
Software & Information Industry Association
Sunburst Technology
Texas Instruments