



News Release

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Education and Business Leaders Call on Congress to Meet President-Elect Obama's Call to Target Classroom Technology Modernization in Economic Recovery Legislation

Focused Investment on Technology-Rich Classrooms Will Create Jobs and Enhance U.S. Global Competitiveness

Washington, DC – January 14, 2009. Four leading education and business organizations – CoSN, ISTE, SIIA and SETDA -- today applauded President-Elect Barack Obama's call to invest in technology for the classroom as part of the forthcoming economic recovery package and urged targeted action by Congress. The groups endorsed the President-Elect's goals to "equip tens of thousands of schools, community colleges, and public universities with 21st century classrooms . . . [and] provide new computers, new technology, and new training for teachers" to not only prime the nation's economic pump but also allow "students in Chicago and Boston [to] compete with kids in Beijing for the high-tech, high-wage jobs of the future."

The Consortium for School Networking (CoSN), International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), Software & Information Industry Association (SIIA) and State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA) have recommended that Congress agree to disseminate these new classroom technology grant funds through the existing Enhancing Education through Technology (EETT) program in order to ensure that the funds quickly reach the neediest schools and are used for their intended purposes.

"We're very encouraged by the economic stimulus proposal now under consideration," said Don Knezek, CEO of ISTE. "It puts a world-class, future-focused education front and center while also preserving and creating jobs now."

The four groups – representing more than one-hundred thousand educators and hundreds of high-tech employers -- believe that a major spending infusion on education technology will create jobs within the education, education services and technology sectors, as well as enable innovative instructional practices in America's classrooms to address the needs of today's digital-native students. For example, a federal expenditure of \$9.9 billion could ensure that every classroom in economically-disadvantaged Title I schools is technology-rich, e.g., well-equipped with computer hardware, software, electronic whiteboards, rich digital and online curricular resources and its teachers provided with adequate professional development and support.

"Stimulus funding to create technology-rich classrooms and broadband access will help ensure that our students receive a 21st-century education, delivering both immediate job creation and preparation of today's students for tomorrow's high-end jobs," stated Keith Krueger, CEO of CoSN. "We urge Congress to fully implement President-elect Obama's bold vision for 21st-century learning."

"After working with the Obama transition, we are extremely optimistic about their commitment to boost classroom instruction into the 21st century through technology, and to achieving that goal through targeted stimulus investment," said Ken Wasch, SIIA President. "Providing meaningful funding for education technology is a win for students, for the economy, and for America's global competitiveness."

"The fact is, America's schools are lagging in the use of technology and it's hurting our students' ability to learn and compete in the global economy," said Mary Ann Wolf, SETDA's Executive Director. "Our position as a world leader in innovation can be dramatically enhanced through this extraordinarily cost-effective investment to modernize our curriculum and instructional practices, creating a globally competitive 21st century learning environment."

CoSN, ISTE, SETDA and SIIA recommended the inclusion of separate, additional broadband and technology infrastructure support for schools in other school construction and broadband components of the economic recovery package, because an influx of technology in classrooms will give rise to a need for increased bandwidth. Additionally, the groups noted that further investments in broadband would improve the nation's unemployment picture, citing a recent study by the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation that a \$10 billion investment in broadband would lead to the creation of nearly one-half million jobs.

About CoSN, ISTE, SETDA and SIIA:

The Consortium for School Networking (CoSN) is the country's premier voice in education technology leadership, serving K-12 technology leaders who through their strategic use of technology, improve teaching and learning. For further information, visit <http://www.cosn.org>.

ISTE is the premier membership association for educators and education leaders improving teaching and learning through the effective use of technology. Home of NETS and NECC, ISTE represents more than 100,000 professionals worldwide. <http://www.iste.org/>

The State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA) is the principal association for state directors of technology and their staff members providing professional development and leadership around the effective use to technology in education to enhance competitiveness in the global workforce. For more information, visit <http://www.setda.org>.

The Software & Information Industry Association (SIIA) is the principal trade association for the software and digital content industry. SIIA provides global services in government relations, business development, corporate education and intellectual property protection to more than 500 leading software and information companies, including many serving education. SIIA and our member companies have long collaborated with educators, policymakers and other stakeholders to improve education through the use of innovative learning technologies. Visit www.sii.net.

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