

September 8, 2004

Dear Member of Congress:

The undersigned education institutions and organizations write to urge you to oppose the \$91 million cut made to the Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) program in the House of Representatives' FY05 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill. We have been moved to contact you because this cut not only takes aim at the only No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) program dedicated solely to classroom-based technology access but also threatens state and local efforts to comply with NCLB. In our opinion, slashing education technology funding at this time would only serve to hinder efforts by states, school districts and schools to improve professional development, foster the development of 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills in students, and ensure that all students have equal access to advanced technologies and the Internet.

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. The program provides states and school districts with funding to purchase hardware, software and infrastructure and to operate professional development programs. The House's proposed cut, which represents a 13 percent reduction over last year, would have grave implications for the ability of states, school districts and schools to conduct effective education technology programs.

Our specific concerns about these cuts are as follows:

**The cuts would reduce professional development for teachers**

States and school districts overwhelmingly use EETT funds to improve professional development for teachers, thereby assisting in realizing a major goal of NCLB – a highly qualified teacher in every classroom. Indeed, NCLB mandates that EETT recipients use at least 25% of their EETT funding for professional development, thereby helping to assure that all teachers attain that goal. According to a recent State Education Technology Directors (SETDA) survey of how recipients use EETT funds, virtually no recipients have opted out of this requirement despite their ability to waive it. We are convinced that reducing EETT funds in FY05 will not only be a setback to individual teachers but will hamper state and school district efforts to prepare their teachers to comply with NCLB's teacher quality provisions.

**The cuts would diminish efforts to provide students with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills**

Beyond the damage to professional development that it would cause, this \$91 million cut to EETT would also deal a sharp blow to efforts to prepare students for 21<sup>st</sup> Century jobs. The vast majority of high-paying positions in the current tight job market require applicants to make meaningful use of technology. For many students, their active usage in school of advanced technologies and the Internet, furnished through EETT formula or competitive grants, allows them to develop the technology skills and knowledge that are prerequisites for obtaining top jobs. For today's students, major EETT cuts would result in reduced access to

technology and the Internet, diminished technology skill development, and, ultimately, fewer job opportunities.

**The cuts would restrict opportunities for low income, minority, and rural students as well as students with disabilities to access technology**

Without question, this EETT cut would redound most painfully on low-income, minority, and rural students and those 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 National Telecommunications & Information Administration study in 2002 found that many of the most disadvantaged students rely solely on their schools and libraries for access to the Internet. Cutting EETT, which is directed to districts with the highest poverty levels, would disproportionately impact those individuals with the fewest options by reducing funding for classroom-based technology access.

In summary, we believe that access to technology is critical for the academic and employment futures of teachers and students and that the major cut to the EETT program under consideration by the House would prove devastating. Therefore, we urge you to oppose this cut to the EETT program and thereby support maintaining professional development opportunities, developing 21<sup>st</sup> Century job skills, and ensuring access to technology for all.

Thank you for your time and attention to this most important matter.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

Consortium for School Networking  
International Society for Technology in Education  
American Federation of Teachers  
American Library Association  
Association of School Business Officials International  
Beaumont Foundation of America  
Council for Exceptional Children  
iEARN-USA  
National Association of State Directors of Special Education  
National Education Association  
National Education Knowledge Industry Association  
TECH CORPS  
Technology Leadership Network of the National School Boards Association

State Organizations

California – Computer Using Educators  
Florida Educational Technology Corporation  
Illinois Computing Educators

Iowa Technology and Education Connection  
North Carolina Association of Technology Administrators  
Louisiana Association of Computer Using Educators  
Maryland Instructional Computer Coordinators Association  
Michigan Association for Computer Users in Learning  
Minnesota Educational Media Organization  
Nebraska Educational Technology Association  
New York State Association for Computers and Technology in Education  
North Carolina Association for Educational Communications and  
Technology  
Pennsylvania Association for Educational Communications and  
Technology  
Utah Coalition of Educational Technology  
Utah State Office of Education  
Texas Computer Education Association

School Districts

Santa Ana Unified School District, California  
North Shore School District 112, Illinois  
Township High School District 214, Illinois  
Council Bluffs Consolidated School District, Iowa  
Blue Valley USD #229, Kansas  
Trigg County Public Schools, Kentucky  
Calcasieu School System, Louisiana  
Allegany County Public Schools, Maryland  
Somerset County Public Schools, Maryland  
New London-Spicer Schools, Minnesota  
Arnold Public Schools, Nebraska  
Atkinson Elem./J.H., Nebraska  
Cedar Bluffs Public Schools, Nebraska  
Cozad City Schools, Nebraska  
Hershey Public School, Nebraska  
Leyton Public Schools, Nebraska  
Lincoln Public Schools, Nebraska  
Logan View Public Schools, Nebraska  
Loomis Public Schools, Nebraska  
Pleasanton Education Association, Nebraska  
Stanton Community Schools, Nebraska  
Stapleton Public Schools, Nebraska  
Winside Public School, Nebraska  
York Education Association, Nebraska  
SER/SFPS Career Academy, New Mexico  
Avery County Schools, North Carolina  
Beaufort County School District, North Carolina  
Buncombe County Public Schools, North Carolina  
Carteret County Public School System, North Carolina

Edgecombe County Public Schools, North Carolina  
Hickory Public Schools, North Carolina  
Pender County Schools, North Carolina  
Richmond County Schools, North Carolina  
Union County Public Schools, North Carolina  
Wayne Central School District, New York  
Whiteville City Schools, North Carolina  
Lancaster-Lebanon IU13, Pennsylvania  
Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit 5, Pennsylvania  
Abilene Independent School District, Texas  
Jayton-Girard ISD, Texas  
Region 14 Education Service Center, Texas  
Cache County School District, Utah  
Ogden City Schools, Utah  
Lake Washington School District #414, Washington  
School District of Hudson, Wisconsin

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