

March XX, 2015

(Identical Letter to be sent to House Chair and Ranking)

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Senate Subcommittee on
Labor, HHS and Education Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Senate Subcommittee on
Labor, HHS and Education Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

RE: Support \$200 million for the Enhancing Education Through Technology Program in FY 16

The undersigned organizations — representing educators, state and local education leaders, and the high-tech industry — urge you to provide \$200 million for the Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) program in the final FY 16 Labor, HHS, and Education Appropriations bill. President Obama included a \$200 million funding request for EETT in his FY 16 Budget.

When Congress passed the No Child Left Behind Act, it voiced bipartisan support for EETT, a program focused on technology professional learning for all educators. Although more than a dozen years have passed, the reasons for Congressional support remain strong today.

Technology and blended learning:

- Improve educator effectiveness, integrate data systems and aid low-performing schools
- Provide a robust, student-centered, digitally powered learning experience
- Provide access to unprecedented learning opportunities online for students in rural and other areas that lack sufficient curriculum and course availability
- Help meet the economy's need for tech-savvy students with the technology skills to succeed in an increasingly global economy

EETT funding would ensure access to professional development and digital tools to effectively leverage the improved classroom broadband connectivity made possible by the Federal Communications Commissions' approval of a substantial increase for the E-Rate program.

For digital learning to become a reality nationwide, educators must receive ongoing, sustainable and scalable professional learning opportunities that EETT supports. According to a 2012 survey by Project Tomorrow, one-third of all educators indicated that the lack of sufficient professional development was a major obstacle to implementing technology in the classroom. Like any profession, educators must be supported to continually hone their craft to ensure students reach high academic success. The advent of digital assessments makes even more acute the importance of educator professional learning to harness data to personalize and strengthen instruction to the needs, styles and interests of students.

EETT also has provided support for classroom technologies that open the door to ways of learning that were unimaginable even a few short years ago. Today's students can collaborate, communicate and create content through blogs, wikis, videos and other forms of project-based learning. Modern educators can choose from a wide array of digital textbooks, online resources and assessments that provide real-time feedback of student progress to personalize the learning experience. However, without sufficient funding for devices, appropriate content and professional learning, many schools may find their limitless digital educational choices severely constrained.

Furthermore, funding for EETT would support state and local technology coordinators, who are so critical to successfully implement school technology programs. Technology coordinators possess deep knowledge of technology, an understanding of the particular professional learning needed for its effective classroom use, expertise in network security and implementation, and an understanding of the regulations governing safe and appropriate use. Without EETT funding, many states and school districts may have to do without these critical personnel.

Therefore, we request that the subcommittee provide EETT with \$200 million in FY 16 appropriations.

For more information, please contact Hilary Goldmann, senior director for government relations, International Society for Technology in Education at hgoldmann@iste.org or 703-672-5909.

Sincerely,

cc: Members of the Senate Labor, HHS and Education Appropriations Subcommittee

