

Appropriations Letters in Support of EETT Funding Circulated in Both the House and the Senate

Despite little legislative action on the FY09 appropriations front, education technology funding advocacy efforts quickened in March with the release of letters from Congressional supporters of education technology. In a letter dated March 19, 2008, 23 House members wrote House Appropriations Committee Chairman David Obey (D-WI) and Labor, HHS and Education Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman James Walsh (R-NY) to request that the Committee fund the Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) program at \$496 million in FY09, the level at which the program was funded in FY05. The letter stated: “We believe that EETT plays an essential role in our nation’s schools fulfilling the student achievement, teacher quality and parental involvement provisions of NCLB. Moreover, the EETT program enables students to develop the technology skills and knowledge that improve their employment prospects in the highly competitive global economy of this century and, by extension, the economic outlook for America as a whole.”

The letter was led by Representatives Ruben Hinojosa (D-TX) and Judy Biggert (R-IL), both of whom are lead sponsors of the Achievement Through Technology and Innovation bill, which would revamp EETT. In total, nine members of the House’s Education and Labor Committee, which authorized EETT, signed the letter, including Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education Subcommittee Chairman Dale Kildee (D-MI).

Over on the Senate side, Senators Joe Lieberman (I-CT) and Olympia Snowe (R-ME) have taken the lead in circulating a letter that requests Senate Appropriators to fund EETT at \$496 million. This letter cites strong academic improvements as a result of excellent technology implementations in five states: Maine, Texas, Missouri, Iowa and North Carolina. To date, ten Senators have signed-on, with many more expected to add their signatures before the March 31 deadline.