

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20510**

October 28, 2015

The Honorable Lamar Alexander  
Chairman  
Committee on Health, Education, Labor &  
Pensions  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Health, Education, Labor &  
Pensions  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Kline  
Chairman  
Committee on Education and the Workforce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Robert C. Scott  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Education and the Workforce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Alexander, Ranking Member Murray, Chairman Kline, and Ranking Member Scott:

As you begin conference proceedings for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), we respectfully request that the final package include a strong commitment, to education technology and technology-specific educator professional development, preferably through the establishment of a stand-alone program. Education technology, when coupled with strong support for educators, has a transformative impact on individualizing instruction and improving student learning. In order to fulfill ESEA's central promise of providing every child access to a high-quality education regardless of his or her zip code, our most underserved schools must be equipped with high-impact tools and training to improve student outcomes. The Every Child Achieves Act (S. 1177) through the Innovative Technology Expands Children's Horizons (I-TECH) program, the Student Success Act (H.R. 5) through the Schools for the Future Program, and the Scott Substitute Amendment (H.AMDT. 66) through Title V, Subpart 4 all offer essential provisions that support integrated technology use in schools and support for educators. Each of these provisions allows for fifty percent of federal funding to be used for technology-centered professional development, which we respectfully asked to be maintained.

In a world that is more connected than ever, today's children absorb information through an increasing variety of digital outlets. However, even as technology becomes more affordable and the breadth of digital resources grows, many high-need students are left at a disadvantage as the "digital divide" expands. Classrooms and families in rural and remote areas or with high proportions of low-income and traditionally underserved students still lack access to valuable technology. A recent Pew survey found that one-third of these students were not able to access

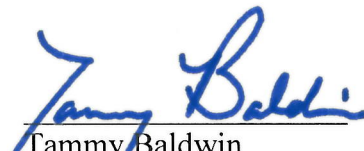
adequate broadband at home either, preventing them from completing online assignments and putting them even farther behind their peers.

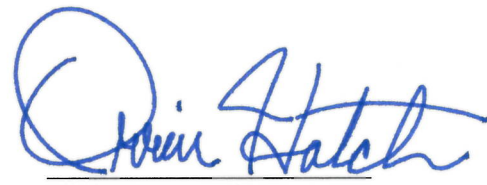
Even when educational technology is available, educators in underserved schools frequently do not receive robust professional development – let alone technology specific professional development – that would allow them to use digital learning to transform student outcomes. In a survey conducted by Project Tomorrow, one-third of all educators cited a lack of sufficient professional development as a major obstacle to implementing technology in the classroom. Failing to invest in the skills of educators leads to underutilization or incorrect implementation of digital learning tools and denies many students access to a wide range of benefits. We must make sure we are maximizing the tools available to increase student learning, and ensuring that federally-funded resources are used in the most effective manner possible.

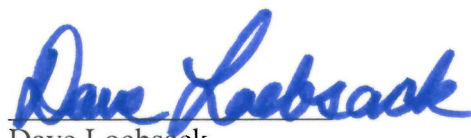
The I-TECH program of the Every Child Achieves Act, the Schools for Future provision of the Student Success Act, and the education technology components of the Scott Substitute Amendment are supported by educators, business, and industry alike. Outside stakeholders who recognize that technology can improve academic gains and lead to a better-prepared workforce have aimed to partner with schools to offer tools and software tailored to students' needs. They understand that students who lack adequate access to technology, at school and at home, are left unprepared to compete in our global economy. Training our educators, ensuring there are adequate digital services or devices at home, and infusing our classrooms with digital learning tools both raises student achievement and invests in tomorrow's workforce which will require workers to interface with technology daily.

This ESEA reauthorization should take a lesson from school districts that have successfully integrated technology into everyday learning and ensure that others have the digital resources to replicate their results. Today, local education agencies with adequate resources and training are using real-time student learning data to inform learning and personalize instruction, implement blended learning projects that mix face-to-face instruction and out-of-classroom use of technology, and more. To increase student learning, prepare America's workforce for tomorrow, empower school districts, and make a sound investment, we urge you to include strong investments in education technology and technology-specific professional development for educators in a final conference package.

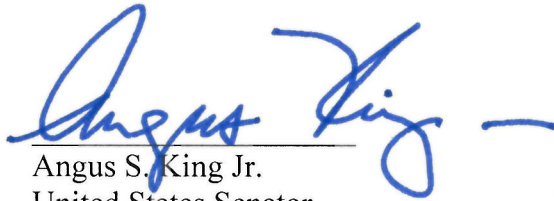
Sincerely,

  
Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator

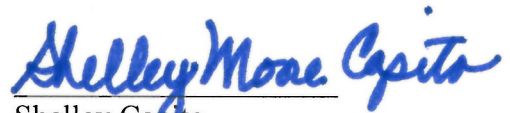
  
Orrin G. Hatch  
United States Senator

  
Dave Loebsack  
Member of Congress

  
Lucille Roybal-Allard  
Member of Congress



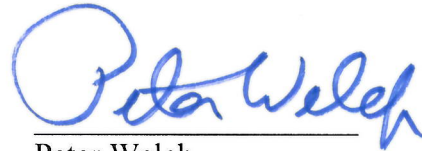
Angus S. King Jr.  
United States Senator



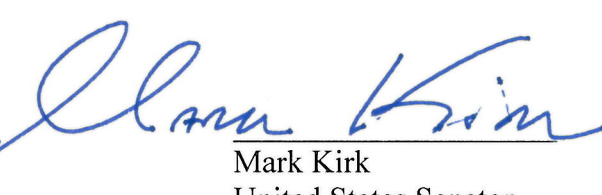

Shelley Capito  
United States Senator



David McKinley  
Member of Congress

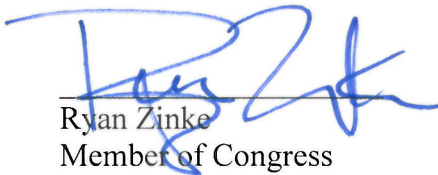


Peter Welch  
Member of Congress



Al Franken  
United States Senator

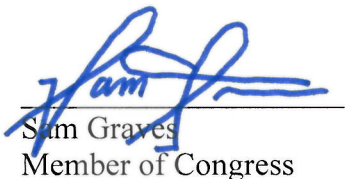
Mark Kirk  
United States Senator



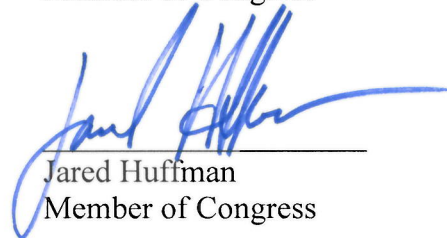
Ryan Zinke  
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress



Sam Graves  
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman  
Member of Congress



Richard Hanna  
Member of Congress



Rod Blum  
Member of Congress



Frank LoBiondo  
Member of Congress



Rubén Hinojosa  
Member of Congress