November 27, 2013

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
313 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 201510

Dear Senator Merkley,

On behalf of the nation’s middle level and high school principals, assistant principals, and other school leaders, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) would like to thank you for introducing the Building Understanding, Investment, Learning and Direction (BUILD) Career and Technical Education Act (S. 1293) to support career and technical education (CTE) exploration programs for secondary school students.

School leaders know that the middle grades are a crucial time to engage students in a rigorous curriculum that will help them transition into high school and be successful in postsecondary education or careers. According to ACT, the level of academic achievement that students attain by eighth grade actually has a larger impact on their college and career readiness upon graduation from high school than anything that happens academically in high school. NASSP has long encouraged a federal focus on middle level reform, including support for the Success in the Middle Act (S. 708) to ensure that students are taught an academically rigorous curriculum with effective supports so that students complete the middle grades prepared for success in high school and postsecondary endeavors.

The BUILD Career and Technical Education Act would authorize $20 million for the establishment of a pilot grant program to support CTE exploration programs in middle and high schools not currently receiving funding under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act. Districts could use the grant for staff expenses and professional development, purchasing or leasing equipment, or evaluating the impact of CTE exploration programs on students’ transition to high school CTE programs of study and their performance in those programs.

Should you have any questions about our support for the BUILD Career and Technical Education Act, please feel free to contact Amanda Karhuse, NASSP Director of Government Relations, at karhusea@nassp.org or 703-860-7241.

Sincerely,

JoAnn D. Bartoletti
Executive Director
NASSP