March 31, 2004

Member of Congress
Washington, D.C. 20151

Dear Member of Congress:

As a member of the Conference Committee for the Fiscal Year 2005 Budget Conference I urge you and other members of the conference committee to use the Senate passed budget resolution as your guide in crafting a conference report.

The Senate Budget Resolution, as passed on March 12th, represents increases in education funding that are necessary to support our national secondary schools. $1 billion increases in both Title I and the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act will help to support our nation’s neediest students. In contrast, the House passed budget resolution accommodates $137.6 billion in revenue reduction over the next five years - we strongly believe that this reduction will come at the expense of key education programs in the form of cuts and spending freezes. We oppose any across the board funding cuts for education programs and encourage Congressional members to work toward a budget that fulfills the needs of our nation’s students.

In addition, as the House and Senate move into the appropriations process, I urge you to consider the specific needs of secondary schools. President Bush has encouraged new funding for important programs such as Adolescent Reading but unfortunately, it comes at the expense of several other programs that are key to improving teaching and learning at both the middle and high school level. Providing new funding while at the same time eliminating equally important resources will not help to move our nation ahead. As you may be aware, the vast majority of federal funding for education does not reach secondary schools. That’s why programs specifically tailored to the needs of secondary schools like the Perkins Career and Technical Education, Smaller Learning Communities and Dropout Prevention programs are essential to raising student achievement, particularly for those students with the greatest of needs.

On behalf of the nation’s secondary school leaders I urge you and your fellow conferees to consider the needs of the 27,000 secondary schools nationwide and use the Senate passed budget resolution as your guide for the conference report.

Sincerely,

Gerald N. Tirozzi, Ph.D.
Executive Director, NASSP