June 17, 2003

The Honorable Ralph Regula, Chair
House Appropriations Subcommittee for
Labor, HHS, and Education
2306 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Regula:

We are writing to urge you to include funding in the FY04 education appropriation bill for the existing multiyear contracts and grants that support the Regional Educational Laboratories and Regional Comprehensive Assistance Centers.

The Network of Regional Educational Laboratories (REL’s) have been, and continue to be, a very important source of assistance in efforts of our members to provide effective education programs that increase achievement of all students across the nation, and in meeting requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLBA). Districts and schools led by our members are facing serious challenges related to increased accountability for results, hiring and retaining qualified teachers, teaching all students to rigorous standards, and other requirements of NCLB.

REL’s and Comprehensive Centers have provided high quality products and direct training and technical assistance services that are very helpful to our members and the districts and schools they lead. In particular, the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory is our partner in developing and providing district level assistance aimed at increasing student achievement systemwide.

While NCLBA provides funding to both the state education agency and to local districts to support implementation, it is not adequate to acquire important and needed assistance provided by REL’s and the Comprehensive Centers that operate with federal funding. In fact, the Education Sciences Reform Act passed by Congress in 2002 that reauthorizes the Regional Educational Laboratories defines one of their most critical roles as assisting state and local education agencies in implementing NCLBA.

Your support for continuing the current appropriation levels for the Regional Educational Laboratories and Regional Comprehensive Assistance Centers will provide $67.1 million for NWREL and $52.7 million for its training and technical assistance center work in FY04. REL’s and Comprehensive Centers have established a record of delivering important, high-quality services over many years that is recognized both by local schools and state education leaders. Members in districts and schools have benefited directly from this assistance, and it is important for these services to continue.

Sincerely,

Gerald N. Tirozzi, Ph.D.  Judy Seltz
Executive Director  Associate Executive Director
National Association of       American Association of School
Secondary School Principals     Administrators