March 27, 2003

Dear Senator:

Re: Sign on to support increased funding for Smaller Learning Communities
Attn: Education and Appropriations Staff

I strongly urge you to sign onto a letter initiated by Senator Jeff Bingaman that supports an FY2004 funding level of $200 million for the Smaller Learning Communities (SLC) program. The letter will be forwarded to Senators Arlen Specter and Tom Harkin, leaders of the Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittee. If you have questions or would like to add your name to the list of signatories please contact Laurie Pines in Senator Bingaman’s office at 224-5839 by March 28th, 2003.

Strong evidence suggests that students learn more, are better behaved, and are less likely to drop out when taught in a smaller learning environment. In addition, a smaller school fosters a safer teaching and learning atmosphere for students and faculty, and improved communication between parents and administration. The end result: higher achievement levels – especially with regard to disadvantaged students.

The NASSP publication *What the Research Shows: Breaking Ranks in Action* cites ample research findings that support smaller learning communities as a school improvement vehicle. It is important to note that SLC is one of the few programs specifically aimed at improvement of secondary schools. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act as reauthorized by No Child Left Behind focuses primarily on learning in the early grades, but support is also needed as students advance through middle level and high school.

I hope you will seriously consider signing onto the letter initiated by Senator Bingaman so that additional schools and school districts will be able to initiate smaller learning environments, so critical to student success.

Sincerely,

Gerald N. Tirozzi, Ph.D.
Executive Director