July 16, 2004

Representative
House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) - the preeminent leadership organization representing middle level and high school principals, assistant principals, and aspiring principals- I am encouraged by the action taken in the FY2005 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education bill to increase funding for education.

NASSP is pleased with many of the program funding levels provided for FY2005. Increases in program funding for the Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) are essential for our nation’s secondary schools as well as vocational and special education students. Also, the addition of funding for a new Striving Readers program proposed by President Bush will address the adolescent literacy needs of thousands of middle level and high school students nationwide.

In addition, NASSP applauds the House for increasing School Leadership program funding. This program is crucial to attracting, training, and retaining quality principals. The increase in funding proposed by the House will allow new grantees for the first time since the program’s inception.

However, a number of programs of critical importance to secondary schools, such as Comprehensive School Reform, Dropout Prevention and Smaller Learning Communities, have been severely decreased or eliminated. These programs address issues such as providing smaller school size for a more effective learning environment, encouraging students—especially “at risk” students—to stay in school, and supporting school wide reform. NASSP will continue to advocate that these needs be addressed by restoring funding for these programs, especially considering that middle level and high schools receive only approximately 15% of Title I funds.

We support the House Appropriations Committee efforts to increase funding for our nation’s secondary schools and applaud Chairman Regula and Chairman Young for their efforts on behalf of education. We look forward to the passage of a FY2005 Labor, HHS, Education Appropriations bill that will meet the needs of the nation’s secondary school students.

Sincerely,

Gerald N. Tirozzi
Executive Director