March 24, 2004

The Honorable Jack Reed
United States Senate
SH-728 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC  20510

Dear Senator Reed:

On behalf of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)—the preeminent school leadership organization representing the nation’s middle level and high school principals, assistant principals, and aspiring principals—thank you for introducing the Preparing, Recruiting and Retaining Education Professionals (PRREP) Act of 2004.

As you are well aware, the nation is facing a critical shortage of principals. Although many individuals are credentialed to become school leaders, too few are applying for the position. The reasons for this shortage are complex, but a year 2000 study performed by the Educational Research Service identifies that the decision not to apply stems from the job’s increased complexity and responsibility, stressful working conditions, and a lack of needed resources and support.

In contrast, your PREPP legislation recognizes these barriers by establishing new principal recruitment and retention programs to attract, train, and support individuals to be strong instructional leaders. PREPP will support enhanced, ongoing professional development opportunities for principals focused on issues that directly affect them in today’s accountability-driven environment. In addition, PREPP encourages reciprocity of principal certification across state borders. Often, the obstacles to transferring to a new principal position in another state outweigh the benefits for individuals applying.

Thank you for recognizing that a crucial link to improved student achievement is a quality principal in every school, and for providing legislation that supports principals in their roles as visionary leaders.

Sincerely,

Gerald N. Tirozzi, Ph.D.
Executive Director