September 20, 2005

Attention Education LA: Message Regarding Hurricane Katrina Education Legislation

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)—the nation’s preeminent school leadership organization serving middle level and high school principals—I would like to urge your support for S.1715, a bill sponsored by Senators Enzi and Kennedy to provide relief for students and institutions affected by Hurricane Katrina. NASSP believes that this legislation provides the most positive and productive response to help the Gulf Coast and surrounding areas address the devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina.

We are especially pleased that S.1715 is a bi-partisan effort focused on delivering the immediate support and flexibility required to aid students and schools, without the addition of politically divisive proposals. This time of rebuilding and rejuvenation should be focused on renewal of the Gulf region’s educational infrastructure, and supporting the schools and communities which are enrolling students displaced by the storm.

NASSP is adamantly opposed to voucher proposals, which are being promoted during this debate. We do not believe a voucher proposal is the best answer to addressing the immediate needs of students or of the schools that are attending to the influx of students in their own communities as a result of the storm. Reports indicate that public schools are dealing well with these extraordinary circumstances and are experiencing no capacity issues due to the increase in student enrollments. Vouchers aside, NASSP does believe the federal government could and should help private schools during this time of need, whether in the form of loans or other temporary support that will replace books, educational materials and other resources lost to the storm.

Thank you for recognizing the importance of acting quickly with regard to Hurricane Katrina legislation. Please do not hesitate to call upon me or my staff as you consider proposals as the Congress moves to action.

Sincerely,

Gerald N. Tirozzi, Ph.D.
Executive Director