December 20, 2005

Senator
Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C.  20515

Dear Senator:

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- we would like to strongly encourage you to OPPOSE the budget reconciliation conference report and Fiscal Year 2006 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education conference report.

Despite record enrollment growth, the Senate budget reconciliation plan drastically reduces the federal education funding available for both mandatory and discretionary programs. In addition, the Labor, HHS, Education appropriations bill cuts education by more than 2% in real terms when inflation is taken into account. The Congressional leadership has also called for an additional across the board cut of at least another 1% - cutting education funding to far below last year's level.

The Labor, HHS, Education appropriations bill is set to eliminate more than $900 million in funding. Secondary schools will be especially hard hit with the elimination of programs like comprehensive school reform, dropout prevention and smaller learning communities. In addition, the bill lowers funding for Perkins vocational and technical education, teacher quality enhancement grants, safe and drug free schools, and innovative education programs, among other vital programs. 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 yet educate 52% of the nation’s students.

We strongly encourage you to make the education of our young people a priority and take a stand against the current conference report as it does not represent a commitment to education or to our nation’s students. We look forward to working with you to pass a FY2006 Labor, HHS, Education conference report that will meet the needs of the nation’s secondary school students.

Sincerely,

Gerald N. Tirozzi
Executive Director