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August 19, 2013

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations
503 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman, Senate Sub-Committee on Labor, HHS, and Education
731 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Mikulski and Senator Harkin,

On behalf of ASCD's 140,000 members, we thank you for your leadership and strong support for education funding. The FY14 education appropriations bill, S.1284—approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee—provides urgently needed funding increases to schools and districts and recognizes the need for crucial financial investments in their work.

Unfortunately, federal funding for education has been subject to multiple cuts over the last few years. The FY11 continuing resolution cut education programs by an aggregate \$1.25 billion and eliminated more than three dozen education programs. The FY12 omnibus appropriations bill cut education funding by another \$233 million. The final FY13 continuing resolution slashed another \$2.4 billion from education programs due in part to the across-the-board, indiscriminate cuts resulting from sequestration. Since FY10, overall discretionary spending for education has been cut by over \$4 billion.

This shrinking investment in education has come at a time of ever-increasing education needs: state budgets are down (31 states are reporting budget gaps totaling \$55 billion for fiscal year 2013); student enrollments are rising (from 2010 to 2020, approximately 2 million more students will be enrolled); and more children are in living in poverty (22 percent) than ever before. As a result of these budget cuts, schools and districts have had to lay off teachers, increase class sizes, eliminate bus routes, reduce the number of advanced placement courses offered to students, and



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even close schools. Although reductions in federal funding are not entirely to blame for all of these results, the consequences of continued cuts will be increasingly hard for schools to absorb.

We appreciate the funding levels for elementary and secondary education in S.1284, and we support the increased investments in Title I (\$125 million), Head Start (\$1.6 billion), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (\$125 million), and the Safe and Drug-Free Schools program (\$80 million) in particular. Also gratifying is the committee's commitment to early childhood education as demonstrated by the \$750 million funding of the new preschool development grants in the Department of Education.

The robust funding levels provided in your bill are much more preferable and appropriate than those in the House FY14 302(b) allocation, which would have devastating consequences for schools and the students they serve.

Preparing students for employment in the 21st century requires a robust federal investment in education. Education attainment has been directly linked to lifetime earnings and has a proven return on investment. Thank you again for your recognition of the importance of prioritizing federal education spending. We strongly support the budget levels represented in S.1284 and urge your continued leadership as appropriations legislation moves through the legislative process.

Cordially,

David Griffith
Public Policy Director