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April 28, 2008

The Honorable George Miller
Members of the House Education and Labor Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Miller and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the 3.2 million members of the National Education Association (NEA) we urge you to support the 21st Century High-Performing Public School Facilities Act (H.R. 3021) and the Loebsock-Kildee Education and Labor Committee substitute to fulfill the goals of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), also known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

This important legislation provides \$6.4 billion in federal grants to help states and local school districts repair and modernize public schools from coast to coast – essential to equipping America’s students to succeed in the global economy of the 21st century. Compliance with the U.S. Green Building Council’s standards for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) would be encouraged. Decision-making would remain at the local level.

Equally important, the legislation would provide an economic stimulus that helps create more than 100,000 new jobs for people who design and build schools – everyone from roofing contractors and construction workers to architects and engineers.

The average American school was built half a century ago. As a result, too many of our children attend overcrowded schools housed in buildings with leaky roofs, faulty electrical systems, and outdated technology. Communities cannot build schools fast enough to accommodate growing student populations.

We urge you to support this important legislation to help states and local school districts stretch their limited resources, continue essential education programs, equip America’s students to succeed in the 21st century, encourage schools to become more environmentally friendly and energy efficient, and help create more than 100,000 new jobs in construction-related services.

Sincerely,

Diane Shust
Director of Government Relations

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Manager of Federal Policy and Politics