



American Association of School Administrators

May 4, 2009

Committee on Education and Labor  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Miller and members of the Committee:

On behalf of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), representing more than 14,000 school superintendents and local educational leaders, we urge your support of **HR 2187, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century High-Performing Public School Facilities Act**. We appreciate the continued work of Representatives Chandler, Kildee and Loeb sack to address this important issue.

There is a growing need around the country to deal with aging school structures and the growing demands on public school facilities. Despite Congressional efforts to provide funding for school districts to meet modernization and renovation needs under the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund within the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, few of those dollars will go toward school construction. Most states are supplanting their effort in education leaving districts with no additional funding. This makes it imperative that Congress pass and fund HR 2187 to ensure that school districts are able to meet their facility needs, especially given the economic downturn.

This bill goes a long way furthering the conversation around the state of public school facilities and the importance of the learning environment to improve student achievement through \$6.5 billion in grants to states and local school districts. We appreciate that this bill will flow from the states to local school districts via formula grant and that districts will be guaranteed a \$5,000 minimum grant.

While we were pleased to see the money go out via formula, we are still concerned that the formula is based on Title I allocations. Under the current Title I formula, dollars are distributed to concentrations of poverty. This is defined by numbers or percentages, whichever is higher. Unfortunately, this often results in larger lower poverty school districts getting more Title I money per child than higher poverty smaller school districts. Many times, smaller and/ or rural schools do not get their share. While this is probably the best option currently available, we strongly urge the committee to make the necessary corrections in the Title I formula in the reauthorization of ESEA to ensure that the necessary federal investment is going to schools and districts where the percent of poverty is the greatest.

Once again, we hope you will support HR 2187 to provide guaranteed support to school districts efforts in school construction, renovation and repair. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mary Kusler'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Mary' being larger and more prominent than the last name 'Kusler'.

Mary Kusler  
Assistant Director, Advocacy & Policy