May 20, 2008

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), representing more than 14,000 school superintendents and local educational leaders, we urge you to support the passage of Concurrent Resolution 312, the FY 2009 Budget Conference Report. This budget agreement takes an important step towards recognizing the importance of the federal investment in education.

The Budget Conference Report would reject the proposed cuts to education suggested by President Bush’s budget and add $8.4 billion over President Bush’s FY 2009 budget proposal for education and workforce programs. While the proposed increase in education funding would make an important impact on local school district budgets, it would only begin to meet the needs for school districts given the increased federal mandates.

As education mandates increase at the local level and costs continue to rise, it is critical for the federal government to increase their investment in education. Nowhere is this truer then in the area of special education. Special education costs continue to rise at the local level while Congress is only paying for 17 percent of the National Average per Pupil Expenditure instead of the 40 percent that was promised. This leaves most districts forced to rob from their general fund balance in order to cover the $15 billion federal short fall for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

The federal investment in education must also focus strongly on students in poverty. Therefore, AASA supports increased funding for Title I programming across the country. We hope that the increased allocation for Function 500 will be used to help bolster funding for both IDEA and Title I.

In closing, AASA strongly urges your support for the conference report for Concurrent Resolution 312 because it makes an important effort in recognizing the importance of a federal investment in education.

Sincerely,

Mary Kusler
Assistant Director, Government Relations