



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION

September 20, 2011

The Honorable Sherrod Brown
SH-713
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Brown:

On behalf of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association's (ASHA) 145,000 members and 5,281 Ohio members, I would like to thank you for your leadership in introducing the Fix America's Schools Today (FAST) Act, which would provide funding for the modernization of our nation's school facilities. Specifically, the FAST Act would allow school districts to confront and eliminate a hidden barrier to student achievement, classroom noise.

A student's ability to hear and understand speech in the classroom is vital for learning. Unfortunately, noisy classrooms reduce the ability to learn. Noisy classrooms occur when the background noise and/or the amount of reverberation in the classroom are so high that they interfere with learning and teaching. We know that when classrooms are noisy it affects speech understanding, reading and spelling ability, behavior in the classroom, attention, concentration, and academic achievement. Learning in an excessively noisy environment is similar to trying to read in a poorly lit room or obstruction by steps while in a wheelchair.

The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) has issued a standard (S12.60-2002) which provides acoustic guidelines for learning spaces, the key for reducing classroom noise and improving acoustics within existing classrooms is acoustical modification of that environment. ASHA looks forward to working with you to pass and enact this important legislation.

Again, thank you on behalf of ASHA, our members, and the millions of students they serve every day in our Nation's schools.

Sincerely,

Paul R. Rao, PhD, CCC, CPHQ, FACHE
2011 ASHA President