



*Great Public Schools for Every Student*

**NEA Supports Rural Schools, Educators, and Communities**

As Congress reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), we urge Members to include provisions that address the needs and challenges facing the country's rural schools and communities.

To this end, NEA supports policies that encapsulate the following areas:

- **Rural communities vary and there is no one size fits all policy solution to serving their needs.** Communities need flexibility and unfettered support.
- **Rural students and educators have unique needs.** Technology, professional development, and staff recruitment and retention are essential.
- **Collaboration should be supported and incentivized in rural communities.** Changes in local economies, such as existing and prospective business demand for new skills, create a necessity for partnerships among schools, business, community groups, and higher education institutions.

**Support the Rural Education Achievement Program**

The Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP) provides funding to rural districts for a wide variety of purposes, including hiring new teachers, providing professional development opportunities, and bringing new technology to the classroom. In addition, REAP levels the playing field for small and high-poverty rural school systems, enabling school districts to undertake significant reform. We support changes to REAP that would allow federal funds to be even more closely targeted to rural, in-need districts. We do not support proposals that would redesign elements of the program into competitive grants.

**Include Pending Rural Provisions for ESEA**

In the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, NEA supports relevant bills that provide additional funding, flexibility, and support for rural schools and communities:

- H.R. 2446/S. 1052 The Rural Education Achievement Program Reauthorization Act
- H.R. 1755 The Rural Early Education Access Act
- H.R. 3078/S. 1281 The Investment in Rural After-School Programs Act
- H.R. 3180 The Strengthening Community Opportunities through Rural Education (SCORE) Act

**Consider the Impact of Whole Child Services**

Students need access to health, dental, and vision care so that they are ready to learn. In addition, NEA members understand that an adequate and healthy diet is essential to academic success. Too many children lack consistent access to all of these services, and the links between them and learning is clear. We look forward to working with Congress to address the unique needs of rural schools and communities in these equally relevant areas.