



NREAC 2016 Legislative Agenda

For 2016, NREAC identified the following major federal advocacy priorities:

Focus on Rural Schools and Funding

NREAC urges Congress to maintain formula grants to provide a more reliable stream of funding to local school districts.

NREAC beseeches Congress to provide incentives, rather than unfunded mandates, to catalyze school improvement efforts in rural districts.

NREAC believes any competitive funds slated for a 'rural set-aside' or 'rural-only' competition should instead be directed to the Rural Education Achievement Program, a proven formula program that supports rural school innovation.

NREAC prioritizes the restoration to pre-sequester levels and opposes any across-the-board cuts.

NREAC supports a federal role that prioritizes investment in Title I and IDEA, recognizing them as the federal flagship initiatives. In light of the failure of federal and state governments to maintain special education funding, districts should be provided greater flexibility to meet the needs of all students.

Every Student Succeeds Act

NREAC urges the U.S. Department of Education to expedite the promulgation of regulations on ESSA, to take care to consider the needs and capacity of rural schools when proposing new regulations, and to ensure that any regulations issued are consistent with the spirit and scope of the law.

NREAC believes ESSA regulations should emphasize that that states are empowered to make assessment and accountability decisions for local school districts.

Education Technology

NREAC strongly supports maintaining E-Rate as an element of the Universal Service Fund.

NREAC supports efforts at the federal level to address the homework gap through expanded access to connectivity at home.

School Nutrition

NREAC supports reimbursing schools when federal food service requirements result in loss of revenue.

NREAC recommends giving districts the option to waive out of unfunded federal food service requirements.

NREAC believes all licensing and certification requirements for school nutrition workers are a state responsibility.

NREAC opposes efforts to increase the administrative burden around eligibility for free and reduced lunch

Perkins CTE

NREAC believes Perkins CTE funds should remain formula based to states and districts.

NREAC believes Perkins should incentivize states to assist districts in providing more effective career counseling and exploration activities.

NREAC strongly supports efforts to streamline the local plan and reduce paperwork and reporting requirements.

Other Priorities

NREAC believes all school districts have a responsibility to maintain a safe and healthy learning environment for students, but geographic and economic challenges in rural communities make this reality more difficult.

NREAC wants to ensure RELs are funded to provide high quality research to rural schools

NREAC supports efforts at the federal level to assist rural districts in recruiting and retaining teachers and school personnel in hard to staff positions through loan forgiveness programs targeted at rural communities and districts

NREAC supports a greater federal investment in early education through the coordination and support of new and already existing school-based and community partnerships.

NREAC supports efforts to ensure Qualified Zone Academy Bonds are readily available to rural schools.

NREAC opposes any and all attempts to create adopt 'backpack funding' approaches to distributing federal funding at the state and local level or any policy that would allow federal funds to private schools.

NREAC supports the reauthorization and re-funding of the Secure Rural Schools program.