



NREAC 2015 Legislative Agenda

For 2015, 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.

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

Elementary and Secondary Education Act

NREAC advocates for complete reauthorization of ESEA this year. Reauthorization should emphasize that that states should be empowered to make assessment and accountability decisions for local school districts.

NREAC supports the Formula Fairness campaign in its efforts to end Title I formula discrimination against disadvantaged rural students.

NREAC supports the All Children Are Equal Act and its inclusion within any ESEA reauthorization as a way to eliminate the unintended negative consequences of number weighting within the Title I formula.

NREAC advocates for key eligibility changes to the REAP program to ensure more rural districts are able to receive the critical funding they need.

NREAC advocates for the inclusion of an Office of Rural Education Policy within the Department of Education within ESEA.

NREAC believes new data requests disproportionately burden rural districts and take away from the primary job of educating children.

NREAC deeply opposes any attempts to redirect Title I funding away from concentrations of students in poverty and to make Title I funding "portable" to public and private schools.

NREAC believes states should dictate the background check policies for school employees and other individuals who come into contact with students.

Education Technology

NREAC believes any reauthorization of ESEA should contain a stand-alone program providing funding for technology, whether current Title II Part D or a similar program

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

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.

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 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 supports efforts at the federal level to assist rural districts in recruiting and retaining teachers and school personnel in hard to staff positions.

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.